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THE GRAY GHOST AND HIS FEATHERBED GUERRILLAS:
A LEADERSHIP ANALYSIS OF JOHN S. MOSBY
AND THE 43RD VIRGINIA CAVALRY

A thesis presented to the Faculty of the U.S. Army
Command and General Staff College in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree

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General Studies

by

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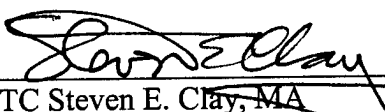
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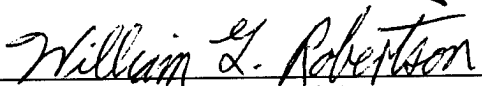
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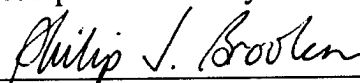
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The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are those of the student author and do not necessarily represent the views of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College or any other governmental agency. (References to this study should include the foregoing statement.)

ABSTRACT

THE GRAY GHOST AND HIS FEATHERBED GUERRILLAS A LEADERSHIP ANALYSIS OF JOHN S. MOSBY AND THE 43RD VIRGINIA CAVALRY by MAJ Michael D. Pyott, USA, 124 pages.

John Singleton Mosby led a successful partisan campaign during the American Civil War for the Confederacy. Prior to the war, Mosby was a frail nondescript lawyer. Entering the war as a private, Mosby eventually rose to the rank of Colonel. He organized, trained, and equipped the 43rd Virginia Cavalry, better known as Mosby's Rangers. This unit grew from nine men to almost nine hundred at the war's end, and conducted many daring celebrated raids on the Union forces and their supply lines. In addition to his raids Mosby provided accurate and timely intelligence to Major General J. E. B. Stuart and General Robert E. Lee throughout his service.

This study is a leadership analysis of John Singleton Mosby using the U.S. Army's Field Manual 22-100, *Army Leadership*. The study examines Mosby's leadership development and evaluates him against the sixteen leadership dimensions that the Army currently uses to evaluate potential officers. The purpose of this study is to determine what leadership qualities Mosby possessed that contributed to his success. The study concludes that Mosby was able to influence subordinates, peers, superiors, and noncombatants; he provided a purpose and gave them direction and motivation; he also continuously sought ways to improve and expand the organization.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

No matter what the leader's rank, or organizational level, each leader has the same obligation. That obligation is to inspire and develop excellence in individuals and organizations; train members towards professional competency; instill members with a spirit to win; see to their needs and well being; and to set standards that will be emulated by those they lead.

John O. Marsh Jr. and General John A. Wickham Jr.,
Quotes for the Military Writer/Speaker

John Singleton Mosby was able to achieve the goal described above for the various units he commanded throughout his service during the American Civil War. Standing just over five feet tall and weighing somewhere between 125 to 130 pounds, John S. Mosby, the "Gray Ghost," is considered by some to have been the most successful guerrilla fighter of the Civil War.¹ One historian Swafford Johnson wrote, "Colonel John S. Mosby, with his raiding detachments of varying size, was probably the best known and the most anxiously sought by the Union forces of any of the partisan leaders. Mosby's absolute fearlessness, his ingenious methods of operating, as well as his innate love of danger and excitement, all combined to make his sudden descents upon the Federal lines of communication spectacular in the extreme."² Many books, papers, and articles have been written about Mosby. Even a television show was aired for a time celebrating his exploits. The purpose of this study is to look at Mosby's life and service and focus on his leadership and command style.

One aspect of the American Civil War that is valuable to the military professional is the study of the leaders who fought during this time period. Mosby is of particular interest because of the nature of his partisan operations. Mosby commanded a

Confederate cavalry unit that grew from a handful of men to an entire regiment at the end of the American Civil War. This unit conducted guerrilla warfare in an area of Virginia that eventually became known as "Mosby's Confederacy," due to the amount of control he exercised over the guerilla operations and civilians in that area. Mosby's Rangers, as his unit came to be known, conducted operations that became legendary during and after the war. Mosby and his men were so feared by the Union leadership that General Hooker was reported to have ordered the planks taken up from the Chain Bridge over the Potomac to prevent Mosby from raiding Washington, D.C.³ Mosby's Rangers were just one of the partisan units fielded by the Confederates during the Civil War, but it was the only one that General Robert E. Lee excepted from an order disbanding the partisan units resulting from a debate over the usefulness of such units.

As the U.S. continues to become involved in military operations other than war (MOOTW) or stability and support operations (SASO), where operations are conducted ranging from humanitarian assistance to peace enforcement operations, the special operations forces (SOF) will be involved in training partisan units or training units to counter partisan operations. It is, therefore, worthwhile to consider the example of a past partisan leader from America's first modern war that can be considered successful. The historians have debated over the years whether Mosby's operations contributed significantly to the war or even whether they prolonged the end of it. It is not important in this examination of Mosby whether either of these debates is truthful or has merit. It is important to know that Mosby was a successful combat leader because he was able to lead his organization continually expanding it up until the end. In my opinion, Mosby was successful because his unit was never captured in total and up until the end of the

war, he was able to carry out operations against the Union forces. Rather than glorify Mosby as some books and the television show have, this study will look at his leadership and try to measure it against the dimensions the U.S. Army is now using to train its leaders. No one has ever evaluated Mosby's leadership using the current U.S. Army doctrine to determine what qualities he possessed that might have made him an effective leader.

To train its leaders and continue to assist in their leadership development, the U.S. Army provides its leaders and commanders with a written doctrinal base in U.S. Army Field Manual 22-100, *Army Leadership*. This manual is the foundation for the Army's leadership assessment and evaluation and it also describes the Army's values and leadership qualities that are required at all levels of command. Leadership is defined by the U.S. Army as, "the process of influencing people--by providing purpose, direction and motivation--while operating to accomplish the mission and improving the organization."⁴ The three major parts of this definition are: influencing, operating, and improving and are called the "leader actions." The other parts of leadership are "values, attributes, and skills." Each of these four areas, values, attributes, skills, and actions, are important when assessing and evaluating the abilities and qualities of a leader. When the U.S. Army was writing the new FM 22-100, the writers used many civilian leadership books to define leadership and to identify the qualities of a leader. It is worth mentioning that Gary Yukl in his book, *Leadership in Organizations*, a book used by the FM 2-100 writers, defines leadership as something that will, "influence processes affecting the interpretation of events for followers, the choice of objectives for the group or organization, the organization of work activities to accomplish the objectives, the

motivation of followers to achieve the objectives, the maintenance of cooperative relationships and teamwork, and the enlistment of support and cooperation from people outside the group or organization.”⁵ This definition is much more complicated than the U.S. Army one but the two essentially say the same thing--influencing others through whatever means in order to accomplish a task or goal.

In order to examine John Mosby’s leadership abilities, it is important to review each one of the four leadership areas briefly and to understand what is written in FM 22-100. The U.S. Army values are divided into seven categories: loyalty, duty, respect, honor, integrity, selfless service, and personal courage. Loyalty is defined as “Bear true faith and allegiance to the U.S. Constitution, the Army, your unit, and other soldiers.”⁶ Duty means that you “Fulfill your obligations.”⁷ Respect is defined as “Treat people as they should be treated.”⁸ Selfless Service is defined as “Put the welfare of the nation, the Army, and subordinates before your own.”⁹ Honor is defined as “Live up to all the Army values.”¹⁰ Integrity is defined as “Do what’s right-legally and morally.”¹¹ Personal Courage is defined as “Face fear, danger, or adversity (physical or moral).”¹²

A leader is a combination of many attributes, which the U.S. Army categorizes into three parts: mental, physical, and emotional. Mental attributes include will, self-discipline, initiative, judgment, self-confidence, intelligence, and cultural awareness. The internal force that motivates a person and his followers to accomplish a task under demanding conditions is called will.¹³ Exercising control over oneself under such circumstances is self-discipline. Initiative is the “ability . . . to act when there are no clear instructions, to act when the situation changes or when the plan falls apart.”¹⁴ Making competent decisions based on known information and logical assumptions is

called judgment. Self-confidence is the belief in oneself that you will be able to perform correctly under any circumstances. The education a person receives in school combined with the education a person gains from reviewing prior experience for given situations defines the Army's view of intelligence. Cultural awareness is the capability to recognize the different backgrounds of the subordinates in your unit, the units operating in conjunction with you, the enemy opposing you, and the area in which you are operating and utilize these differences to the best way possible.

Physical attributes are subdivided into health fitness, physical fitness, and military and professional bearing. Health fitness is those actions that are taken to preserve a person's physical health, such as doctor's exams, good diet, and others. Physical fitness is the preparation of a person to meet the demands of combat. Military and professional bearing is the capability to know how to look and act like a leader in the manner of appearance and the actions that you display.

Emotional attributes are divided into self-control, balance, and stability. Self-control is the ability to maintain discipline over oneself's emotions during stressful arduous conditions. Balance is the capability to use the right emotions in the right situations. Using anger or compassion appropriately for the situation at hand are examples of balance. Stability is the ability to maintain composure in the face of stress and to exhibit the emotions that will promote confidence in your subordinates.

The third area of the U.S. Army's leadership model is the skill area. A leader must possess these abilities to command an organization. The skills of a leader are broken down into interpersonal skills, conceptual skills, technical skills, and tactical skills. Interpersonal skills are the tools that a leader uses to work with people while

conceptual skills “enable you to handle ideas. They require sound judgment as well as the ability to think creatively and reason analytically, critically, and ethically.”¹⁵

Technical skills are the talents a person acquires in order to meet the daily job requirements. Tactical skills are used to determine how best to employ his organization in a manner to accomplish a mission.

The fourth and final area of leadership is the leader’s actions. A leader’s actions are divided into influencing actions, operating actions, and improving actions. Leaders use influencing actions to affect the performance of their subordinates and organizations. These actions fall into three categories: communicating, which comprises all forms of relaying and receiving information; decision-making using, which uses logical reasoning to choose a course of action that will aid in successfully accomplishing a given task; and motivating, which encompasses the actions a leader takes to affect and direct others towards accomplishing a task.

Operating actions are used by leaders to accomplish tasks and they also can be categorized in three ways. The first is planning and preparing, to include “developing detailed, executable plans that are feasible, acceptable, and suitable; arranging unit support for the exercise or operation and conducting rehearsals.”¹⁶ Executing, the second, includes accomplishing a task in accordance with requirements, insuring that subordinates’ needs are met, and the means used to conduct the task are used efficiently. The third operating action, assessing, is the means a leader uses to determine how the organization or plan is working.

Improving actions are those actions used by a leader to insure that subordinates and organizations are constantly working to achieve greater proficiency in the execution

of their tasks. Developing, building, and learning are the three types of improving actions. Using a combination of these actions, a leader may have greater success in developing “individual subordinates as leaders,” in working within his organization to develop cohesiveness and in improving his professional knowledge and that of the organization.¹⁷

These leadership areas and dimensions can best be reviewed by referring to Table

1. It is an adaptation of one from FM 22-100.

Table 1. Leadership Areas and Dimensions

| Leadership | | | |
|----------------------|------------|----------------|--------------|
| VALUES | ATTRIBUTES | SKILLS | ACTIONS |
| •LOYALTY | •MENTAL | •INTERPERSONAL | •INFLUENCING |
| •DUTY | •PHYSICAL | •CONCEPTUAL | •OPERATING |
| •RESPECT | •EMOTIONAL | •TECHNICAL | •IMPROVING |
| •SELFLESS SERVICE | | •TACTICAL | |
| •HONOR | | | |
| •INTEGRITY | | | |
| •PERSONAL COURAGE | | | |

Having now reviewed the U.S. Army’s leadership model, this thesis will look at Mosby in terms of the sixteen leadership dimensions the Army uses to evaluate and assess its leaders--mental, physical, emotional, interpersonal, conceptual, technical, tactical, communicating, decision-making, motivating, planning, executing, assessing,

developing, building, learning. Values are a separate area and will be examined with regard to standards as they existed during the American Civil War.

Was John S. Mosby an effective leader according to the sixteen leadership dimensions? Did Mosby possess the leadership attributes necessary for an effective leader? Did Mosby have the skills required to be an effective leader? Was Mosby able to influence subordinates, peers, superiors, adversaries and noncombatants? Did he seek to improve his subordinates and the organizations he commanded? What values did Mosby possess? This paper will attempt to answer these questions.

The following are the major areas of this study:

1. It is composed of four chapters. Chapter 1 is the introduction which provides the purpose and model that the study will use. Chapter 2 focuses on Mosby's life before the American Civil War and seeks the influences on his leadership development. Chapter 3 examines his service in the 1st Virginia Cavalry and begins to evaluate his leadership using the model. Chapter 4 reviews his command in the 43rd Battalion Virginia Cavalry and his Cavalry Regiment, Partisan Rangers. Chapter 5 analyzes Mosby's life after the war, and uses the model to determine if he continued his leadership in his post-war endeavors.
2. It will briefly describe the partisan tactics used by Mosby and his men to gain a better perspective on his leadership.
3. It will combine accounts of other historians.
4. It will provide some information on the subordinates of Mosby's commands.
5. It will provide a brief analysis of the results and effects of Mosby's operations.

6. It does not include:
 - a. Historical events of other American Civil War units.
 - b. Historical events occurring outside the American Civil War except those relating to Mosby.
 - c. Any attempt to prove that Mosby's leadership example is currently being used or should be used by the U.S. Army.
 - d. Any determination as to whether Mosby's operations might have helped win the war for the Confederacy.
 - e. Any determination as to whether Mosby's operations protracted the war and might have caused unnecessary suffering on his supporters.

In conclusion, this paper will examine Mosby's leadership during his life and service, analyzing it using the sixteen leadership dimensions of the U.S. Army. The author spent two years in a Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) assignment evaluating over one hundred potential U.S. Army officers using these leadership dimensions. This examination will provide insight into his leadership abilities and may provide students of partisan operations with the leadership tools necessary for future endeavors.

Endnotes

¹Swafford Johnson, *History of the U.S. Cavalry* (New York: Smithmark Publishers Inc., 1994), 76.

²Francis T. Miller, *The Photographic History of the Civil War*, vol. 10, *The Cavalry* (New York: Castle Books, 1957), 176.

³Edward J. Stackpole, *Sheridan in the Shenandoah, Jubal Early's Nemesis* (New York: Bonanza Books, 1961), 369.

⁴Headquarters, Department of the Army, Training and Doctrine Command, Field Manual 22-100, *Army Leadership* (Fort Leavenworth, Kansas: Headquarters Training and Doctrine Command, June 1999), 1-4.

⁵Gary Yukl, *Leadership in Organizations*, 3d ed. (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1994), 5.

⁶Headquarters, Department of the Army, Training and Doctrine Command, Field Manual 22-100, *Army Leadership* (Fort Leavenworth, Kansas: Headquarters Training and Doctrine Command, June 1999), 2-3.

⁷*Ibid.*, 2-4.

⁸*Ibid.*, 2-5.

⁹*Ibid.*, 2-6.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, 2-7.

¹¹*Ibid.*, 2-8.

¹²*Ibid.*, 2-9.

¹³*Ibid.*, 2-11.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, 2-12.

¹⁵*Ibid.*, 2-25.

¹⁶*Ibid.*, 2-27.

¹⁷*Ibid.*, 2-28.

CHAPTER 2

A PARTISAN LEADER'S DEVELOPMENT

Leadership is developed, not discovered.¹

Leadership 101

This chapter will discuss Mosby's leadership development and how it was molded prior to the Civil War. In their book *Leadership Enhancing the Lessons of Experience*, Richard L. Hughes, Robert C. Ginnett, and Gordon J. Curphy state "Although we believe experience plays a large role in leadership development, we believe formal education can play an important role, too."² They also go on to say that other people play an important role in a leader's development. These include parents, teachers, and superiors. Observing others in leadership positions also provides positive and negative sources for leadership development.³

The U.S. Army uses a model to show the foundations of leadership development.

Figure 1 is a modified representation of this model.

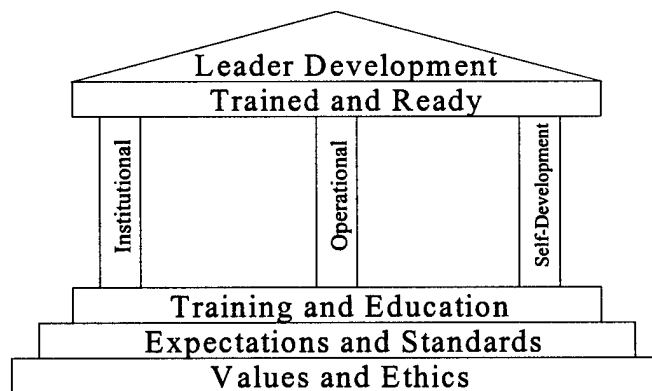


Figure 1. Leader Development Foundation Model. Source: FM 22-100, 5-14, *Military Leadership*.

This model shows the process of leader development with a foundation of values and ethics, the expectations and standards that society or an organization places on the individual, and the training and education the individual receives. The three pillars demonstrate the necessity of institutional training, operational training, and self-development that an individual needs in order to become a trained and ready leader.

Before an analysis can be done of his leadership, it is important to study the influences on his life and the effect these influences had on his leadership development. The influences would be the foundation for Mosby much like the foundation in the model above.

Born in Edgemont, Powhatan County, Virginia, 6 December 1833, John S. Mosby was the son of Alfred D. Mosby, and Virginia, who was the daughter of Reverend McLaurine, an Episcopal minister.⁴ The Mosbys had been in Virginia for some time and were considered a family of some affluence. Throughout his childhood, Mosby suffered from being sickly and frail and was constantly the victim of bullying.⁵ Mosby describes himself by saying, "In my youth I was very delicate and often heard that I would never live to be a grown man."⁶ At home he was spoiled by his family who may have taken pity on his physical ailments. "Dr. John C. Hughes treated him for years and advised his mother to always provide him the most favorable circumstances or he might develop consumption and die."⁷ Mosby's physical condition made him resentful of other boys. He disliked physical sports and many of the activities that youths would engage in.⁸ His resentfulness would be exhibited in the fights he would start with other boys.⁹ While at home Mosby was indulged by his family. "At home everyone pampered Jack. It was not difficult because with family and friends he was unselfish, gentle, and kind, with a

sprightly personality that gave him the ability to enter a room and light it up with his buoyant wit and invigorating charm.”¹⁰ Due to his physical condition, Mosby turned to developing his mind. One of the first books he read for enjoyment was the *Life of Marion*. The revolutionary partisan gave the future partisan something to dream about and Mosby was able to relate to the Swamp Fox and his underdog fight against the British.¹¹ Mosby also enjoyed reading Sir Walter Scott, Washington Irving, and other authors that provided glimpses of heroism and chivalry.¹² These authors and their stories may have given Mosby an addition to the values that were being instilled by his family. During this period in America, the mother had the most direct influence on the values the children developed.

In the eighteenth century culture, a daughter was taught that her chief function as a wife was to assist her husband in establishing a family, and to bear and rear children with strong moral ethics. An underlying rule of the time was that parents were willingly and personally responsible for the proper education and moral growth of their children. Thus, since mothers were solely responsible for everything that went on within the home, including the raising of their children, character development was primarily the responsibility of the mother. She accomplished this by imparting her long-held family values and traditions, with the learned input from her husband, to her children from the age of two to about the age of seven.¹³

Since Mosby's mother was the daughter of a minister, she probably had a deep sense of her own moral values and their importance. In her role of raising the children of the Mosby household the possibility existed that she transferred her moral values to Mosby.

Mosby's initial education was very rudimentary, but he did show a particular skill in learning Greek, and later on Latin.¹⁴ He was also influenced by an abolitionist who was employed by the family to educate his sisters. The abolitionist Abby Southwick engaged Mosby in discussions on politics and slavery. Although raised in a family that

owned slaves, based on his conversations with Abby Southwick, Mosby did not think kindly of the institution.¹⁵ He experienced firsthand the effects of alcohol when his schoolmaster became intoxicated during a lunch break and the older boys in Mosby's school had to bring the teacher back to the school where he drunkenly taught the rest of the day. "John had never seen a person under the influence before, and the experience left him a teetotaler. At the age of twenty he attended a temperance camp and was never tempted by alcohol."¹⁶ As a youth, Mosby also engaged in hunting, a sport that would later aid in his scouting abilities.¹⁷ The introduction of firearms would also serve to teach him the basics of marksmanship necessary for future combat. Another skill he would learn during his youth was horseback riding. Mosby grew up with horses and rode to and from school.¹⁸ This is another skill that would be necessary when war broke out.

At the age of sixteen, Mosby graduated from the Male Academy in Charlotte, Virginia. He received good grades in Latin, Greek, French, algebra, and geometry.¹⁹ He enrolled in the University of Virginia on 3 October 1850 where he studied the Greek language and literature. "Mosby was outstanding in Greek and Latin but barely passed his other courses. . . . Mosby finished Greek at eighteen years of age and remained another year to round out his education in mathematics and other subjects."²⁰ Mosby was described as having a one overarching feature and that "dominant trait was his tendency to fight."²¹ He got into trouble with the local law enforcement when he assaulted the town sergeant who was attacking a fellow student for participating in a "noisy student party."²² For this Mosby was indicted, found guilty and fined ten dollars.²³

The most famous incident of Mosby's prewar days was the fight he had with George Turpin. On 26 March 1853, Mosby engaged some local musicians to play for a

party at his parent's home. A local bully, George Turpin, requested the same musicians for the same date. When informed that they were already committed, Turpin made some disparaging remarks to the musicians about Mosby.²⁴ When Mosby heard about this he sent Turpin a letter asking him to explain his remarks. "Such a message from frail-looking nineteen-year-old enraged Turpin, who went to Mosby's boardinghouse to seek a confrontation."²⁵ As Turpin went to see Mosby, Mosby fired a pistol. "Turpin collapsed in the hallway, the bullet having entered his mouth, lodging in the neck."²⁶ Mosby was arrested and tried for "malicious shooting and unlawful shooting."²⁷ The jury found him guilty of only "unlawful shooting," and he was sentenced to one year in jail and a fine, and the faculty expelled him from the University of Virginia. During his confinement, Mosby took an interest in the legal profession declaring "The law has made a great deal out of me. I am now going to make something out of the law."²⁸ Virginia Governor Joseph Johnson received a petition from nine members of Mosby's jury stating that the act was of self-defense and that the jury had been bullied into the original verdict. He also received a petition signed by 300 citizens stating that Mosby's youth and good conduct should be taken into consideration. Several respected physicians wrote to advise that "Mosby was constitutionally consumptive, that he was in a precarious state of health, and that imprisonment for a year would incur the risk of his life."²⁹ Subsequently, the governor pardoned Mosby and he was released after serving only seven months of his sentence.

After his release from jail, Mosby began studying law in a local law office and then established his own practice in Howardsville, Virginia, after passing the bar. He was the third lawyer to set up practice in Bristol, a fast developing area, receiving

customers from Virginia and Tennessee, and Mosby was successful bringing in a number of customers.³⁰ “Many of them based their conviction that he was a great propounder of the law not so much on his quotations from Blackstone as on his ready store of classical and poetical citations.”³¹ Mariah Pauline Clarke, who was visiting town, became the object of Mosby's affection. After a period of courtship they moved to her hometown of Bristol, Virginia, and they were married on 30 December 1857 in Nashville, Tennessee. Their marriage was one of happiness, and Mosby doted on her by buying presents and the like to show his affection. Pauline was very religious, but Mosby did not share her faith.³² The Mosbys would have two girls, May and Beverly, born to them in the next two years.³³ Mosby would soon take an interest in politics, but he was a Unionist and his political support was for Stephen Douglas, an unpopular figure in Mosby's voting precinct.³⁴

A starting point for the analysis of Mosby's leadership development is to first examine the development of his values. A person's values are continuously developed over a lifetime but their beginnings can be attributed to the environment in which the person was raised. Mosby always held his mother in high esteem and she gave Mosby a solid foundation for his values. Although not clearly stated, it can be assumed that she mentored him on the values of honor and integrity. This argument can be based on the fact that she was the daughter of an Episcopal minister and that the Mosbys were a respected family. The fact that his wife was deeply religious while Mosby was not does not change this, but she probably impacted on his commitment to these values. He may not have shared her faith, but he obviously respected her and saw her beliefs as important

to her and therefore somewhat important to himself. “[Mosby] sincerely supported Pauline in her faith and her desire for a Catholic education for the children.”³⁵

Honor was considered to be very important to the nineteenth century man and there are numerous examples of men during this time period willing to fight if they felt their honor had been besmirched. “A Confederate chaplain, Charles Todd Quintard, said in praise of General Benjamin Cheatham that he ‘understood thoroughly that it was better that a leader should lose his life than his honor.’ ”³⁶ Mosby demonstrated how his honor was important to him in his attack on Turpin when he felt that his honor had been impugned and Mosby defended it. Mosby might have also received his ideas of honor and values from his readings on chivalry and honor.

James A. Ramage, in his book, *Gray Ghost*, proposes that Mosby “developed an extremely dynamic bipolar personality,” as the result of being bullied by the public as a child and being pampered at home by his family. Ramage also states that “As a victim of bullying, he developed an unusually keen sense of justice that gave him a lifelong sense of deep resentment at the slightest injustice or dishonesty. . . . Mosby’s self-esteem was so strong that it gave him very unusual self-confidence and courage.”³⁷ Ramage goes on to say:

In his inner circle of family and friends he had lasting intimacy, and he responded with totally unselfish generosity, loyalty, and love. But everyone outside that circle of intimates he regarded differently. He viewed the outside as hostile, a world to be attacked and conquered; the way to order and control his world and maintain his self-esteem was to conquer antagonists. This is why throughout his life Mosby’s opponents considered him an indefatigable adversary.³⁸

Ramage’s proposal also gives credence to the belief that Mosby had developed respect for others and been loyal to the causes he found worthy. He saw it as his duty to fight if he felt a situation was unjust. Because Mosby was so frail and his health seemed

so poor, he always tried to overcome this condition by lashing out in these situations. The attack on Turpin also reinforced the values that Mosby had internalized maintaining his honor, demonstrating both physical and moral courage and the sense of duty he felt in defending his honor and himself. The maturing of Mosby and his values were exemplified later in his life in how he displayed moral courage in his support for an unpopular candidate who shared his beliefs. Ramage also states, "There was never any decadence or corruption or dishonesty in his life; Mosby had no skeletons in his closet."³⁹ This example of living a "clean life" lends acceptance to the idea that Mosby's values developed during his youth and he maintained them throughout his life. A leader should have these values inculcated in order to be able to lead others.

In examining the attributes of Mosby, it appears that he had a strong sense of will. He always sought to overcome his frailty in public by fighting and by continuing to attend school and finishing his studies in spite of his difficulties in learning subjects other than Greek or Latin. Will is also demonstrated in how he continued to improve his mind even while imprisoned. Mosby's self-discipline and judgment could be questioned at this point. By attacking a policeman and later shooting George Turpin, he demonstrated that while he stood up for his beliefs, he clearly failed to overcome his own impulses and made poor decisions which resulted in his confinement and punishment. He did take initiative, displayed self-confidence in these situations and was decisive when confronted with what appears to be overwhelming odds. Mosby was an intelligent man but initially he was not learning from his mistakes. His marriage to Pauline and his later success as a lawyer add credence to the assumption that he was learning to overcome his mental attribute shortcomings.

Physically, Mosby was not healthy as he was continually described as frail and weak. A position can be made that Mosby was trying to overcome this condition as he grew older but he also allowed his physical condition to aid him when he was placed in jail. It can be assumed that as a lawyer, Mosby learned the importance of having a professional bearing, and displayed a proper appearance in appropriate attire for the job. As a father, Mosby should have learned the responsibilities of taking care of a family and being the paternal leader setting an example.

Emotionally, Mosby was not in control in his youth. He placed himself in situations in which he allowed his emotions to rule and he was punished for these actions. The elements of balance and stability under emotional attributes were also in question during Mosby's youth for the same reasons. As a lawyer he learned how to restrain his emotions and how he acted on them, or he might have been disbarred or held in contempt of court.

As Mosby left his home and interacted more with society, his interpersonal skills naturally improved. Interpersonal skills are required of a lawyer because he has to attract clients and work with juries in a courtroom. Mosby was successful so the assumption can be made that his ability to work with others was good. Mosby's conceptual skills can also be examined along this same line. He improved his ability to think critically and creatively as he became more educated and this became paramount to his success as a lawyer. His technical skills as a lawyer would also have to be sufficient for his success. The marksmanship and horseback riding skills he learned as a youth hunting would also be developing but they would be a necessary part of the foundation. As a combat leader

in the future, he did not yet possess the technical skills, but he had a foundation from which to build upon.

As a student and then a lawyer, Mosby was required to learn the requirements of reading and writing as part of his education. In the courtroom Mosby demonstrated his ability to speak well in a public forum honing his oral communication and oral presentation skills. These skills are necessary actions required of leaders. By his apparent success, and the comment on his oratory skills, Mosby demonstrated that he mastered these. These qualities were part of the foundation necessary for Mosby's later use as a leader of men in a combat situation.

In looking at the next leadership area, Actions, Mosby was able to influence others through communicating and his decision making. He influenced others in the courtroom, was able to court a wife, and demonstrated standing up for others which are all examples. He was able to plan and prepare and execute those plans if not always with the outcome he desired. Mosby was also continually improving himself as demonstrated by his self-study while imprisoned.

So what does all this mean? To characterize Mosby at this point, he was an emerging leader who had a strong values base that was reinforced by the woman he married. Mosby was driven to succeed in what he set out to do although he did not always display the self-discipline and judgment necessary for a good leader. He had physical limitations that he was seeking to overcome, and he allowed himself to lose self-control of his emotions. His marriage most likely began to provide a balance to his life and stability that forced him to begin controlling his emotions. Mosby was learning the skills necessary to survive in a civilian environment. He had the hunting and riding

background to provide him some tactical knowledge, but he had not received the military training required to lead others into combat successfully. Mosby's actions, in the leadership framework, show that Mosby was learning how to influence, operate, and improve but again, only in the civilian environment. In the author's opinion, based on hundreds of evaluations of future leaders, Mosby was improving, but he was not yet ready to command because of his lack of military knowledge.

Endnotes

¹ John C. Maxwell, *Leadership 101* (Tulsa, OK: Honor Books, 1994), 16.

² Richard L. Hughes, Robert C. Ginnett, and Gordon J. Curphy, *Leadership Enhancing the Lessons of Experience*, 2d ed. (Chicago: Irwin Publishing, 1996), 52.

³ Ibid., 42-43.

⁴ James J. Williamson, *Mosby's Rangers, A Record of the Operations of the Forty-Third Battalion of Virginia Cavalry from its Organization to the Surrender* (New York: Sturgis and Walton Co., 1909), 14.

⁵ James A. Ramage, *Gray Ghost The Life of Col. John Singleton Mosby* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 1999), 17.

⁶ John S. Mosby, *The Memoirs of Colonel John S. Mosby*, ed. Charles Wells Russel (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1959), 4; James A. Ramage, *Gray Ghost* (Lexington, KY: The University Press of Kentucky, 1999), 5.

⁷ Ramage, 18.

⁸ Mosby, 6.

⁹ Kevin H. Siepel, *Rebel, The Life and Times of John Singleton Mosby* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1983), xxviii.

¹⁰ Ramage, 18.

¹¹ Mosby, 19.

¹²Siepel, 22.

¹³Raymond Naworol, "Robert E. Lee: Character-Centered Leadership," (Master's Thesis, Command and General Staff College: Fort Leavenworth, KS, 1995), 67.

¹⁴Virgil Carrington Jones, *Ranger Mosby* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1944; reprint, Mclean, VA: EPM Publications, 1972), 20.

¹⁵Mosby, 5-6.

¹⁶Ramage, 16.

¹⁷Mosby, 5.

¹⁸Ibid; Ramage, 17.

¹⁹Siepel, 23-24.

²⁰Ibid., 19.

²¹Ramage, 18.

²²Ibid., 20.

²³Ibid.

²⁴Ibid., 20-21.

²⁵Jeffrey D. Wert, *Mosby's Rangers* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1990), 26.

²⁶Ibid.

²⁷Ibid., 27.

²⁸Ibid.; Ramage, 24.

²⁹Jeffrey D. Wert, *Mosby's Rangers* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1990), 26-27; and Jones, *Ranger Mosby*, 26.

³⁰Ramage, 30-31.

³¹Ibid., 29.

³²Ramage, 29-30.

³³Ibid., 30.

³⁴Ibid., 31.

³⁵Ibid., 30.

³⁶Gerald F. Linderman, *Embattled Courage* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1989), 32.

³⁷Ibid., 19.

³⁸Ramage, 19.

³⁹Ibid.

CHAPTER 3

A PARTISAN LEADER ENTERS THE WAR

Virginia went out of the Union by force of arms, and I went with her.¹

John S. Mosby, *Memoirs*

As the U.S. dissolved into two factions, Mosby initially supported the Union and did not favor secession.² Mosby voluntarily joined a militia company, The Washington Mounted Rifles, demonstrating patriotism for his native state. This was an obvious example of his loyalty to the state, which was very common during this period in the U.S. Most citizens did not feel a strong loyalty to the U.S. because most Americans did not travel outside of their locale. Generally, Americans were content to live and die within their own counties and states and that was where their loyalties lay.

The unit Mosby joined was commanded by Captain William E. "Grumble" Jones, who had graduated from the U.S. Military Academy, West Point.³ The nickname originated when Jones served in the Federal Army before the war. "He could not get along with anybody, could not get along with himself."⁴ Captain Jones organized the company for one year. It was during his service with Captain Jones that Mosby learned cavalry tactics and military discipline. Mosby stated: "Captain Jones had strict ideas of discipline, which he enforced, but he took good care of his horses as well as his men. There was a horse inspection every morning, and the man whose horse was not well groomed got a scolding mixed with some cursing by Captain Jones . . . he drilled his own company and also a company from Marion, which had come to our camp to get the benefit of his instruction in cavalry tactics."⁵ Although an accomplished horseman,

Mosby did not like the discipline of repetitious cavalry drill. "There was nothing about [Mosby] then . . . to indicate what he was to be--he was rather a slouchy rider, and did not seem to take any interest in military duties. . . . We all thought he was rather an indifferent soldier."⁶ This was where Mosby learned the tactical and technical skills necessary to lead others in the military. Captain Jones, while not liked, certainly influenced his subordinates, planned and prepared them for combat seeking to improve them. Mosby would later comment on his view of camp life.

For two hours, in a cold wind, I walked my round and was very glad when my relief came and I could go to rest on my pallet of straw. The experience of my first night in camp rather tended to chill my military ardor and was far more distasteful than picketing near the enemy's lines on the Potomac, which I afterwards did in hot and cold weather, very cheerfully; in fact I enjoyed it. The danger of being shot by a rifleman in a thicket, if not attractive, at least kept a vidette awake and watching. At this time I was the frailest and most delicate man in the company, but camp duty was always irksome to me, and I preferred being on the outposts.⁷

The military life did not appeal to Mosby but he did enjoy conducting individual reconnaissance. "Scouting and vedette duty suited his restless nature."⁸

As a private, Mosby was a good follower. In his memoirs he stated only two times where he was ever punished for failing to follow orders.

Once I had been detailed for camp guard and, having been relieved just as the company went out to drill, I saddled my horse and went along. I had no idea that it was a breach of discipline to be doing double duty, until two men with muskets came up and told me that I was under arrest for it. I was too proud to say a word and, as my time had come, I went again to walking my rounds. Once after that, when we were in camp on Bull Run, I was talking at night with the Colonel in his tent and did not hear the bugle sounded for roll call. So a lieutenant, who happened to be in command, ordered me, as a penalty, to do duty the rest of the morning as a camp guard. He knew that my absence from roll call was not willful but a mistake. I would not make any explanation but served my tour of duty.⁹

Another example of Mosby's followership and sense of duty was exhibited in the wear of uniforms. "Captain Jones also made requisition for uniforms, but when they arrived there was almost a mutiny. They were a sort of dun color and came from the penitentiary. The men piled them up in the camp, and all but Fount Beattie and myself refused to wear them."¹⁰ The issue with the troops was the fact that they were from the prison and probably not that attractive. For Mosby, however, it was a simple matter of following orders. Later Mosby would again demonstrate his loyalty by being one of only two men in his company to volunteer for reenlistment without first receiving a furlough.¹¹

Mosby may have learned one of his future tactics as a partisan leader of dispersing into the community during this period. "We marched ten miles and then disbanded to disperse in squads, under the command of an officer or of a non-commissioned officer, to spend the night at the country homes. . . . When roll was called the next morning at the rendezvous at old Glade Spring Church, I don't think a man was missing."¹²

J. E. B. Stuart was the regimental commander then and he had the responsibility to change the horseriders into cavalymen. "Since there was only one way to accomplish such a transformation, Stuart himself, on the day after the new companies' arrival, led them north into the Union lines at Martinsburg. . . . In the following days, Stuart pushed the men through punishing drills and reconnaissance over a fifty-mile front."¹³ Mosby learned a lot from Stuart, especially the effectiveness of cavalry operations. As Mosby wrote later in his memoirs, "In his work on the outposts Stuart soon showed that he possessed the qualities of a great leader of cavalry. He never had an equal in such service. He discarded the old maxims and soon discovered that in the conditions of

modern war the chief functions of cavalry are to learn the designs and to watch and report the movements of the enemy.”¹⁴

Mosby would witness the First Battle of Manassas (or First Battle of Bull Run in the South) and his tactical base of knowledge would continue to grow.

Although Mosby was in a forward position where he could see most of the battle, he did not get into the first battle of Manassas as soon as he would have liked because the Washington Rifles remained in reserve. However, when the Union lines finally shattered, Mosby’s unit was called upon to pursue the fleeing enemy. They chased the defeated force for over six miles until darkness covered the Union retreat. Mosby’s first taste of battle provided two lessons. First, he observed and survived the carnage of the first major battle of the war. Second, he witnessed how quickly the cavalry can terrorize the enemy’s exposed flanks and rear.¹⁵

After Manassas, Mosby realized his lack of military knowledge and began to spend his free time improving himself by reading. “The pause in the war also provided Mosby with time for reading military works such as Noland’s *Employment of Cavalry*, Napoleon’s *Maxims*, and some books on partisan warfare. Mosby apparently gained considerable knowledge from the study of military history. Letters to his wife and his memoirs often referred to vignettes from other wars.”¹⁶

In February 1862, Stuart first took notice of Mosby. Mosby was detailed to escort a group of ladies to a dinner that Stuart was having. Upon reporting to Stuart that the ladies had arrived, Stuart asked Mosby to stay for dinner because the weather was turning bad. Mosby was humbled by Stuart’s presence and had to be ordered to join Stuart for dinner and later breakfast because he felt out of place. “It has always been a mystery to me why Stuart made me his guest that night and did not put me with his couriers--which would have been more agreeable to me.”¹⁷ The very next day, Mosby was informed of his promotion to lieutenant as Colonel Jones’ regimental adjutant.¹⁸

The job of an adjutant required a lot of paperwork, duties that Mosby did not care for. He wrote in his memoirs, “I remember the few weeks I served as an adjutant with less satisfaction than any other portion of my life as a soldier.” It was during this time in March 1862 that Stuart again took notice of Mosby and his skills. Mosby conducted a reconnaissance with four men behind Union lines during which they “discovered that they [Union troops] were making a feint movement on the railroad, while they were really moving in another direction . . . which resulted in a General Stuart’s ordering our regiment in pursuit and the capture of about 30 prisoners, 16 horses, arms, etc.”¹⁹ Stuart would note in a report he filed: “Adjutant Mosby . . . of the First Virginia Cavalry, volunteered to perform the most hazardous service, and he accomplished it in the most satisfactory and creditable manner. They are worthy of promotion and should be so rewarded.”²⁰ Mosby would not receive an award but he was gaining the attention of Stuart and more importantly, tactical knowledge that was invaluable.

The staff officer skills of an adjutant, while not always enjoyable, were necessary to assist in the preparation for command. Mosby had the opportunity to observe Stuart closely and improve his own leadership skills. As an adjutant, with the responsibility of conveying the commander’s orders and directives, Mosby saw how the regimental commander accomplished these actions and improved his leadership proficiency. Stuart was also becoming a mentor to Mosby and the value of mentorship can never be underestimated. In their book, *Leadership Enhancing the Lessons of Experience*, Hughes, Ginnett, and Curphy state, “In terms of value, both mentors and mentorees benefit from this relationship. Mentors benefit by the greater influence they accrue by having former mentorees in various positions across the organization. . . . The mentoree

benefits from this relationship by gaining an influential ally and through the mentor's tutoring about the subtler aspects of organizational ethics, influence, and leadership."²¹

In April 1862, the Confederate Congress passed an act mandating that officers would be elected by the men of the unit they would command. The 1st Virginia Cavalry was reorganized as Jones left the regiment and Fitzhugh Lee was elected as the commander. Mosby resigned as adjutant and also resigned his commission.²² There are many arguments as to why Mosby resigned, but the most common is that Mosby and Lee had incompatible personalities. Mosby's resignation demonstrated his loyalty to Jones and also that he was learning to exercise control of his emotions by resigning instead of acting inappropriately. When Mosby resigned as the adjutant, Stuart placed Mosby on his staff and told him he would seek a commission for him. Stuart had seen his abilities from earlier missions and Mosby was very happy to be in his new position. "The loss of my commission did not weigh a feather against the pleasure of being directly under the orders of a man of genius."²³ Although assigned only as a scout on Stuart's staff, Mosby would learn a lot from him. Mosby remarked he, "made me all that I was in the war."²⁴ At this point Mosby and Stuart's mentor--mentoree relationship would blossom.

During his service on Stuart's staff, Mosby was given the mission that first brought his name into the limelight.

One morning I was at breakfast with Stuart, and he said that he wanted to find out if McClellan was fortifying on the Totopotomy, a creek that empties into the Pamunkey. I was glad to go for him and started off with three men. . . . We did not get the information for which we were sent, but we did get intelligence of even more value. We penetrated McClellan's lines and discovered that for several miles his right flank had only cavalry pickets to guard his line of communication with his depot at the White House on the Pamunkey. Here it seemed to me, was an opportunity to strike a blow.²⁵

Mosby's reconnaissance enabled Stuart to conduct his famous ride around McClellan's army. "He was the first to make the circuit of the Federal Army while in front of Richmond, thereby enabling General Stuart to make his celebrated raid around the entire army of General McClellan, on which occasion Mosby went as guide."²⁶ Over the next four days, Mosby would lead Stuart's forces back along the celebrated ride around McClellan's army riding over 100 miles, taking prisoners, burning equipment, wagons, boats, and confiscating horses and supplies.²⁷ This reconnaissance is depicted in figure 2.

Mosby described this mission to his wife Pauline as "the grandest scout of the War."²⁸ It was apparent that Mosby was learning the tactical and technical skills of reconnaissance. Stuart forced Mosby to write down all that he had seen insuring that the information was conveyed correctly from the source. "Stuart listened to Mosby's tale of McClellan's vulnerability and questioned him about the roads, the troops he had seen, and the country people he had interviewed. Stuart was at last satisfied: 'Go to the adjutant's office and write down what you have said.'"²⁹

Mosby's successful reconnaissance mission was a clear example of his leadership abilities. Stuart gave him very short notice of the mission and Mosby had to quickly conduct problem analysis as part of conceptualizing the operation.

Mosby's health was not a factor as he conducted both missions without problems and he maintained control over his temper. It could be argued that Mosby volunteered for such missions or enjoyed them because they allowed him the chance to take risks.

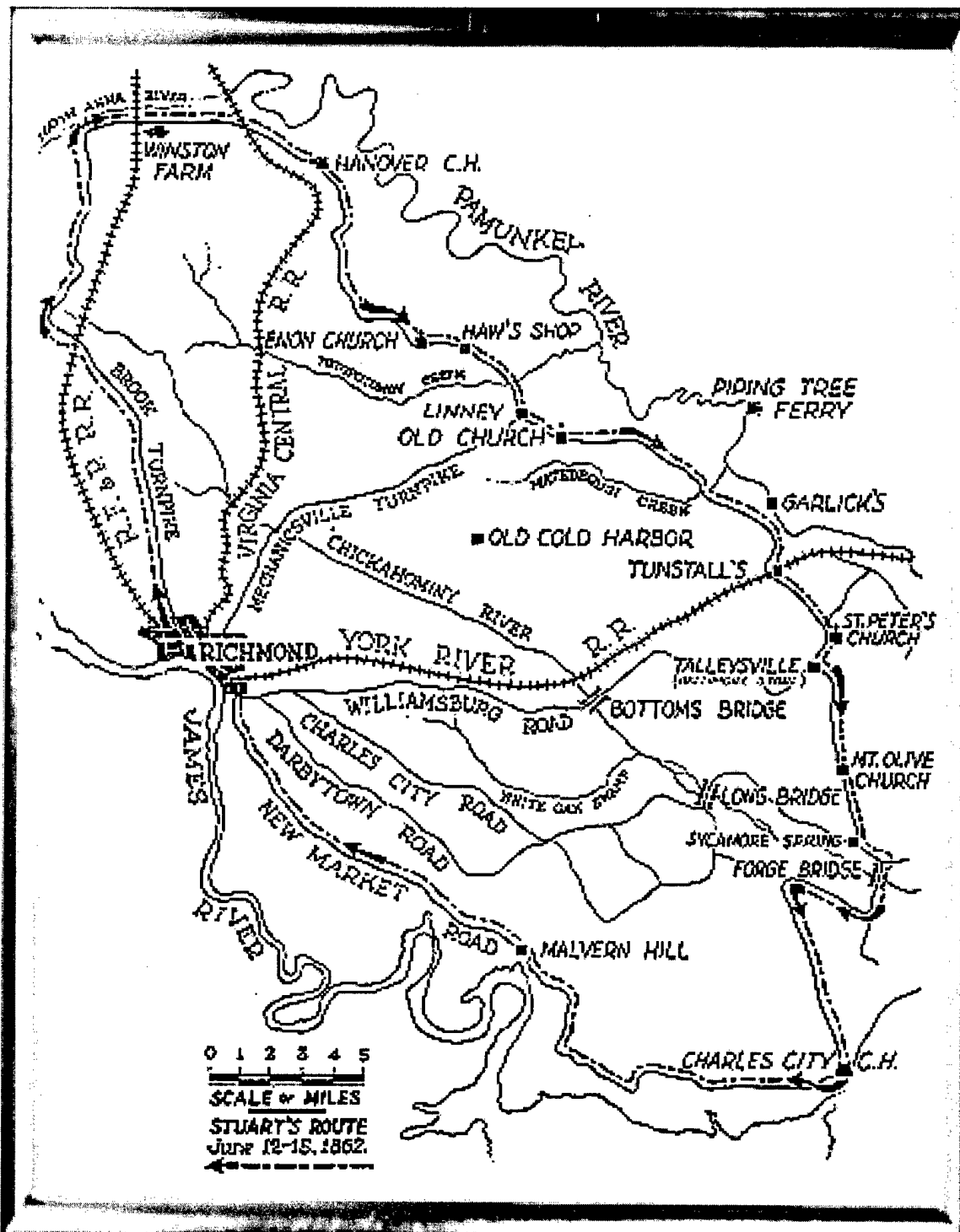


Figure 2. Map of Mosby and Stuart's Ride around McClellan. Source: *Shotgun's Home of the American Civil War*, [Information on-line] available from <http://www.civilwarhome.com/stuartsmap.html>; Internet; accessed on 2 March 2000.

This might be an example of a lack of stability but it was his nature to do so. Mosby's skills as a combat leader were emerging as he was planning and organizing these missions. Mosby recognized his lack of knowledge about the terrain and asked Stuart for guides, which he supplied. Mosby was clearly improving his leadership abilities while in the service of Stuart as a scout. Even though he had been a reluctant soldier, Mosby was becoming very tactically and technically competent. Mosby's tutelage under Stuart was making him a successful leader.

Mosby recognized his ability to work behind Federal lines conducting reconnaissance. Using initiative, he pressed Stuart to give him a small group of men with whom he could conduct reconnaissance.

Stuart refused his request but did provide Mosby a letter of recommendation to take to General Jackson showing that he indeed held him in high regard. "General: The bearer, John S. Mosby, late first lieutenant, First Virginia Cavalry, is en route to scout beyond the enemy's lines toward Manassas and Fairfax. He is bold, daring, intelligent, and discreet. The information he may obtain and transmit to you may be relied upon, and I have no doubt that he will soon give additional proofs of his value."³⁰ This shows that Stuart thought highly of Mosby and saw his leadership potential. Mosby began to understand that the nature of partisan warfare was where he excelled.

I really thought that there was a chance to render effective service. I had served the first year of the war in a regiment of cavalry in the region which was now in Pope's department and had a general knowledge of the country. I was sure then--I am surer now--that I could make Pope pay as much attention to his rear as his front, and that I could compel him to detail most of his cavalry to guard his long line of communications, or turn his commissary department and rear over to me--which would have been perfectly satisfactory to me. There never was afterwards such a field for partisan war in Virginia. Breaking communications is the chief

work for a partisan--it defeats plans and starts confusion by destroying supplies, thus diminishing the offensive strength of an army.³¹

Mosby left to find Jackson on 19 July, 1862, but enroute he was captured by a Federal cavalry regiment at the Beaver Dam depot. Mosby impressed his captors: "Sprightly appearance and conversation . . . displays no small amount of Southern bravado in his dress and manners. His gray plush hat is surmounted by a waving plume, which he tosses, as he speaks, in real Prussian style."³² The military bearing that Mosby demonstrated in his appearance was obviously based on Stuart who dressed in similar fashion. Mosby was treated well by his captors and in a letter to his wife he stated that the Union commander ordered Mosby's weapons returned to him and a Union colonel offered to loan him some federal money.³³ The Federal cavalry found Stuart's letter of recommendation and sent Mosby off to imprisonment in Washington. It is possible that Mosby failed as a leader and a soldier when he allowed himself to be captured. Mosby was captured after deciding to ride a train to visit his wife and dispatching his horse to be sent ahead to Jackson. While waiting for the train, he was caught unawares by the Federal troops.³⁴ Ten days after being taken to the Old Capitol Prison in Washington, Mosby was transported with other prisoners to be exchanged and he was held at Fort Monroe. Always the scout conducting reconnaissance, Mosby observed vital intelligence.

When we arrived at Hampton Roads, I saw a large number of transports with troops lying near. As a prisoner I kept up my habits as a scout and soon learned that they were Burnside's troops who had just come from North Carolina. If they were reinforcements for McClellan, it would indicate that he would advance again on Richmond from his new base on the James. On the other hand, if they sailed up the Chesapeake, it would show that they were going to join Pope, and that McClellan would be withdrawn from the peninsula. This was the problem that I had to solve. . . . had become pretty well acquainted with the captain of the

steamer that brought us down from Washington, and found out that he was a Confederate in sympathy; . . . he whispered to me that Aquia Creek on the Potomac was the point. . . . That settled it – McClellan's army would not advance, but would follow the transports northward.³⁵

Using good problem analysis, decisiveness and judgment Mosby recognized the importance of where these transports were going and realized that this information was needed by General Lee. Taking the initiative, Mosby went to Richmond as fast as possible. "Mosby hurried toward Richmond, and walked the last twelve miles to reach Lee's headquarters in the August heat."³⁶ Finally getting to see General Lee, Mosby was able to convince Lee that his information was accurate reminding him of his involvement with Stuart's ride.³⁷ General Lee began to take notice of Mosby's abilities and asked Mosby his opinion on the next Federal attack of Richmond. "I considered it a high compliment that he should ask my opinion on such an important matter."³⁸ Mosby was continuing to display his loyalty to the Confederacy and his physical stamina.

The description of how Mosby overcame the journey to get the information to Lee was a great example of how Mosby was always trying to overcome his frail, physical limitations and used his will to do this. Judging his attributes, mentally, he understood the necessity of the information which demonstrated his conceptual skills. His judgement comes into question because of his capture, but it appeared to be only a momentary lapse from which he was able to recover. Mosby maintained control over his emotions, something he had improved upon from his youth. His actions demonstrated that he was able to communicate the necessary information the commanders needed. They also show that Mosby quickly assessed the situation and developed a course of action to execute.

Mosby would continue conducting scouting operations for Stuart and over the next several months he would conduct minor operations to harass the Union troops.

Mosby would demonstrate his abilities to act as a partisan force during this time:

When Burnside moved to Falmouth he arranged to defend Washington by leaving Gen. Franz Sigel north of the Rappahannock with Sigel's 11th Corps and Gen. Henry Slocum's 12th Corps. On November, 20, Halleck ordered Sigel to withdraw closer to Washington, and he move his headquarters to Fairfax Court House, with cavalry pickets thrown out several miles to the west. During Sigel's movement Lee in Fredericksburg worried that Sigel might be headed to Alexandria to embark on boats for the Peninsula. Therefore, before Stuart left Culpeper for Fredericksburg, he detailed nine men to Mosby for a reconnaissance to determine where Sigel was going. Mosby succeeded, not only in correctly analyzing Sigel's move, but also in driving Sigel's pickets. At Bull Run bridge Mosby's squad found a regiment of Union cavalry on patrol out of Centreville taking a break with ten men on picket a short distance toward the bridge. Mosby dismounted his nine men as skirmishers, and they charged, firing their carbines and screaming the Rebel yell while Mosby galloped about on horseback shouting orders to imaginary squadrons. Assuming that Stuart's entire brigade was upon them, the ten pickets fled in panic and stampeded the regiment. . . . By turning a scout into a raid, Mosby demonstrated that he could operate independently thirty-five miles behind enemy lines with no Confederate force nearby.³⁹

With the coming onset of winter weather, the regular forces of the Confederate Army postponed major operations. Mosby took advantage of this and used his successes as proof of his abilities to ask Stuart for men to conduct partisan operations.⁴⁰ Stuart gave Mosby fifteen men and the nucleus of Mosby's Rangers was created. These men, sometimes called "Mosby's Gang" conducted operations for two months harassing the Union outposts protecting Washington. "Union pickets on the cavalry screen began pulling in their outposts at night, withdrawing to the security of fifty-man reserve camps, where they posted videttes, built fires, and went to sleep."⁴¹ Using the cover of darkness, Mosby attacked these videttes and sent them scattering. Mosby described some of his activities in a letter to Stuart:

I have the honor to report that at 4 o'clock on the morning of the 26th instant I attacked and routed, on the Ox road, in Fairfax, about 2 miles from Germantown, a cavalry outpost, consisting of a lieutenant and 50 men. The enemy's loss was 1 lieutenant and 3 men killed and 5 captured; number of wounded not known; also 39 horses, with all their accouterments, brought off. There were also 3 horses killed. I did not succeed in gaining the rear of the post, as I expected, having been discovered by a vedette when several hundred yards off, who fired and gave the alarm, which compelled me to charge them in front. In the terror and confusion occasioned by our terrific yells, the most of them saved themselves by taking refuge in a dense thicket, where the darkness effectually concealed them. There was also a reserve of 100 men half a mile off who might come to the rescue. Already encumbered with prisoners and horses, we were in no condition for fighting. I sustained no loss. The enemy made a small show of fight, but quickly yielded. They were in log-houses, with the chinking knocked out, and ought to have held it against a greatly superior force, as they all had carbines.

My men behaved very gallantly, although mostly raw recruits. I had only 27 men with me. I am still receiving additions to my numbers. If you would let me have some of the dismounted men of the First Cavalry, I would undertake to mount them. I desire some written instructions from you with reference to exportation of products within the enemy's lines. I wish the bearer of this to bring back some ammunition, also some large-size envelopes and blank paroles.

I have failed to mention the fact that the enemy pursued me as far as Middleburg without accomplishing anything.⁴²

Mosby was also receiving more recognition for his exploits as evidenced in the endorsements Stuart and Lee placed on his letters, saying, "Respectfully forwarded as additional proof of the prowess, daring, and efficiency of Mosby (without commission) and his band of a dozen chosen spirits."⁴³

As Mosby continued his operations he learned of a gap in the center of the Union screen on in late February of 1863. "From prisoners of war he [Mosby] learned that five miles inside the hole in the line, [Colonel Percy] Wyndham and General Stoughton, commander of a brigade of infantry, had fallen to the temptation of 'headquarterism'. . . . Wyndham and Stoughton were sleeping in Fairfax Court House separate from their men."⁴⁴ To capture a Union general was just too big of a carrot for Mosby to pass on.

Mosby conducted reconnaissance and enlisted the aid of a deserter from Wyndham's 5th New York Cavalry, Sergeant James F. Ames. The Fairfax Court House was a small town approximately seventeen miles to the west of Washington and it appeared to have been secure. While Stoughton and Wyndham both had their headquarters there, their subordinate units were nearby but not in the town itself. "The target was enticing but risky because, even though there was no body of troops in town, it would mean marching within one and one-half miles of over twenty-five hundred men in the vicinity."⁴⁵ Mosby and his men entered the town, "He divided the men into squads of four or five men and gave them assignments, upon completion of which they were to report back to the courthouse."⁴⁶ See figure 3 for a depiction of the raid. "Mosby's growing fame was greatly increased by the capture of Brigadier-General Stoughton, at Fairfax Court-house, on the night of 8 March, 1863. This bold enterprise was effected by Mosby, who penetrated the Federal lines with twenty-nine men and succeeded in bringing off his captures without loss or injury."⁴⁷ Mosby demonstrated great tactical and technical competence and leadership during the "Stoughton Raid." "Though Mosby was in the village an hour, rounding up prisoners and horses, and was surrounded by thousands of Federals sleeping peacefully in their camps, not a shot was fired as the raiders left with their prisoners and booty. They started in one direction, then turned sharply and vanished in another. This illustrates a characteristic of Mosby, that he kept his wits about him in a tight situation, and instantly employed guile when it would serve better than boldness."⁴⁸

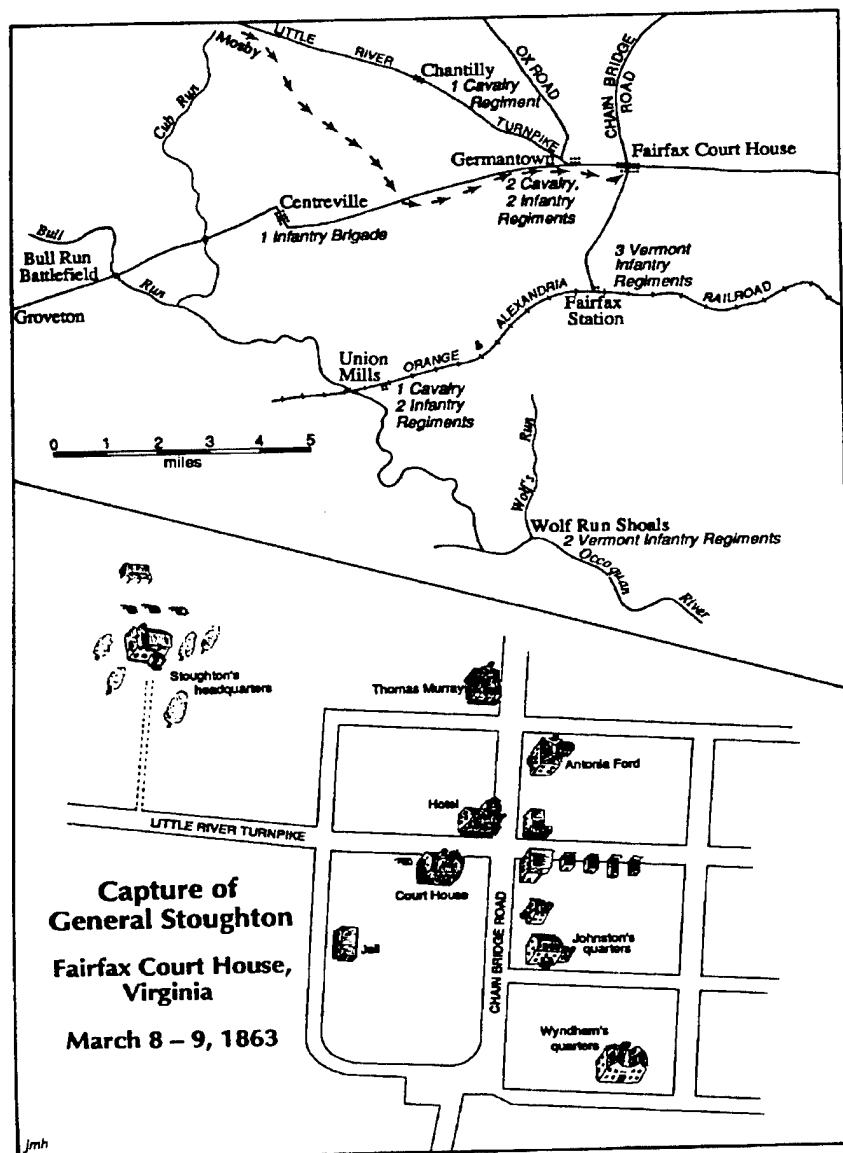


Figure 3. Capture of General Stoughton. Source: copied from James A. Ramage, *The Gray Ghost*, 67.

In his report, Mosby not only mentioned the spoils of his raid but he credited his subordinates and also admitted some of his mistakes.

I have not yet heard whether the enemy pursued. It was my purpose to have reached the Court-House by 12 o'clock, but this was frustrated by our

mistaking our road in the darkness, by which we were delayed two hours; but for this occurrence I should have had ample time not only to have made more captives, but also to have destroyed the large amount of quartermaster's, commissary, and sutlers' stores accumulated there. They were stored in the houses of the town, and it was impossible to have burned them without destroying the town.

The fruits of this expedition are 1 brigadier-general (Stoughton), 2 captains, and 30 men prisoners. We also brought off 58 horses, most of them being very fine, belonging to officers; also a considerable number of arms. We left hundreds of horses in the stables and other places, having no way of bringing them off, as I was already encumbered with more prisoners and horses than I had men. I had 29 men with me; sustained no loss. They all behaved admirably.⁴⁹

To briefly analyze Mosby at this point, he was an effective leader. There was not one instance of a lapse of his values. Mosby displayed the mental attributes of will, initiative, and self-confidence in executing the Fairfax Courthouse raid. Physically, Mosby appeared to overcome his frailties by leading his men without showing any problems. Mosby appeared to maintain control over his emotions. Mosby used good problem analysis as part of his conceptual skills, and tactically he showed that he could accomplish a risky mission. His actions demonstrated that he communicated his intent for stealth to his men, and that he was decisive. He planned and prepared his men and was able to influence them to execute a dangerous, difficult task being extremely stealthy in the process. Mosby was developing subordinates in the process too. He assigned missions to subordinate squads and trusted them to accomplish them, which they did.

Mosby was rewarded for his efforts by a promotion and finally a command.

His Excellency the President has been pleased to show his appreciation of the good services and many daring exploits of the gallant J.S. Mosby by promoting the latter to a captaincy in the Provisional Army of the Confederate States. The General commanding is confident that this manifestation of the approbation of his superiors will but serve to incite Captain Mosby to still greater efforts to advance the good of the cause in which we are engaged. He will at once proceed to organize his command as indicated in the letter of instructions this day furnished

to him from these Headquarters.⁵⁰

Mosby also received orders that directed how he was to organize his men.

The general commanding directs me to say that it is desired that you proceed at once to organize your company, with the understanding that it is to be placed on a footing with all troops of the line, and to be mustered unconditionally into the Confederate service for and during the war.

Though you are to be its captain, the men will have the privilege of electing the lieutenants, so soon as its numbers reach the legal standard. You will report your progress from time to time, and, when the requisite number of men are enrolled, an officer will be designated to muster the company into the service.⁵¹

Mosby organized a small unit of men, and they continued to conduct reconnaissance operations with success. Stuart urged Mosby in a letter not to use the term Partisan Rangers:

You will perceive by General Lee's accompanying instructions that you will be continued in your present sphere of conduct and enterprise, and already a captain, you will proceed to organize a band of permanent followers for the war, but by all means ignore the term "Partisan Ranger." It is in bad repute. Call your command "Mosby's Regulars," and it will give it a tone of meaning and solid worth which all the world will soon recognize, and you will inscribe that name of a fearless band of heroes on the pages of our country's history, and enshrine it in the hearts of a grateful people. Let "Mosby's Regulars" be a name of pride with friends and respectful trepidation with enemies.⁵²

Stuart gave Mosby some good advice in this. He told him to avoid the name because of the connotations surrounding it. He told him how to organize his command to insure that he incorporated the right people, and he reminded him that he was under no time constraint. This was pretty sound advice for a new commander of an unconventional organization. It also showed the model for how the modern military would form its own special operations forces. They would be able to choose the right people, with the right qualifications, and the leadership would be given the latitude to do so. Mosby chose not to follow Stuart's guidance.

Mosby wanted a partisan ranger unit, not a regular one. He informed Stuart that he was organizing his unit under the provisions of the Partisan Ranger Act and that he wanted to enlist the men in his unit as Partisan Rangers.⁵³ “Mosby was now authorized to raise a unit subject to the Partisan Ranger Act of 1862. This act stated that “Officers and enlisted men of such units . . . were equal to troops in the regular armies of the Confederacy and were subject to the Articles of War and Army Regulations. As an inducement for the raising of partisan commands, Congress allowed the members of the organizations payment for the ‘full value’ of any ‘arms and munitions’ seized from enemy units.”⁵⁴ Mosby realized the value of having the name, and it may have flamed his visions of heroism from his childhood readings. “He liked the term himself. It had attraction to the average soldier, and he knew it would draw him recruits faster than would ‘Mosby’s Regulars,’ the substitute Stuart suggested.”⁵⁵

The bickering over the name for a unit displays a certain lack of loyalty to Stuart by Mosby. Mosby felt that by using the term he would enhance his influence in building his command. The unit began to conduct partisan/guerrilla operations, harassing the Federal forces as often as possible. At this time in nineteenth century America, no one had seen guerrilla operations conducted like this since perhaps the American Revolutionary War. Mosby and his men had demonstrated a framework for guerrilla and cavalry operations that is still used today as the standard.⁵⁶

The next action that Mosby would conduct was the Herndon Station Raid. A daylight operation, this raid would serve as a model for many of the raids Mosby would conduct later in the war.⁵⁷ “Eight days after the capture of Stoughton, Mosby struck the screen again, this time in the daylight in the northern sector about nine miles north of

Fairfax Court House, at Herndon Station. On 16 March, he met with forty men at Rector's Cross Roads and rode fourteen miles to Ball's Mill on Goose Creek, rested overnight with friends, and the next day moved against the twenty-five man picket post of the 1st Vermont Cavalry. . . . Mosby had his men masquerade as the Union relief party."⁵⁸ Mosby captured the vidette, preventing him from sounding an alarm and went on to effect the capture of prisoners, horses, and equipment. In his report, Mosby stated:

Yesterday I attacked a body of the enemy's cavalry at Herndon Station, in Fairfax County, completely routing them I brought off 25 prisoners--a major (Wells), 1 captain, 2 lieutenants, and 21 men, all their arms, 26 horses and equipments. One, severely wounded, was left on the ground. The enemy pursued me in force, but were checked by my rear guard, and gave up the pursuit. My loss was nothing. The enemy have moved their cavalry from Germantown back of Fairfax Court-House, on the Alexandria pike. In this affair my officers and men behaved splendidly.⁵⁹

Six days later on 23 March 1863, Mosby would try another daylight attack, this time in Chantilly. Traveling over twenty-three miles at a continuous speed scouting all the way, when he reached the vicinity of Chantilly his horses were exhausted. Some of his men attacked the picket line anyway and this caused the Federals to form a pursuit. Realizing the predicament he was in, Mosby quickly came up with a plan to counter the superior number of Union forces on fresh horses. Mosby would lead the Union troops in a false retreat and then charge them from an ambush while his units used their deadly, accurate revolvers. "His maxim henceforth would be to never stand still and receive a charge but always take the offensive."⁶⁰ This operation aided Mosby in his effort to build his group of men into a fighting unit.

The Chantilly raid was not a significant military operation tactically, but it was very important psychologically for two reasons. First, this was a "confidence mission" for the newly formed unit. It was extremely important for the morale of the unit, confidence in the leadership, and future support from higher headquarters

to be successful on the first mission. Secondly, the ability of a small group of Rangers to capture nine prisoners had a negative impact on the enemy's morale.⁶¹ The stress he was able to apply to the Federal lines of communications was so

great the commander of the Army of the Potomac felt that the guerrillas must be destroyed. To accomplish this, "pickets around Union camps were strengthened; patrols made wider and more frequent circuits; wagon train escorts were increased; enough soldiers were diverted to guard the Orange & Alexandria Railroad that they were in sight of one another, throughout its length. All to little avail. Mosby countered by concentrating his attacks and by flitting about the country so that the point of his next strike could not be anticipated."⁶²

The actions at Herndon Station and Chantilly exhibit Mosby's knowledge of guerrilla tactics and procedures and how he applied them in order to accomplish his goal. Mosby realized the potential effects his unit might have on the Federal ability to wage war. Mosby demonstrated his ability to conceptually analyze a problem and then plan and organize for it. "The military value of the species of warfare I have waged is not measured by the number of prisoners and material of war captured from the enemy, but by the heavy detail it has already compelled him to make, and which I hope to make him increase, in order to guard his communications, and to that extent diminishing his aggressive strength."⁶³ Mosby's loyalty to a higher cause was demonstrated by his realization of the bigger picture. Mosby was extremely self-confident and used initiative in the audacious charges he made while facing the Union forces. Again, there is no evidence that Mosby's physical condition was a hindrance to him and his anger only appeared when he was in the heat of battle. His tactical skills were improving as he began to understand how he could use his operations given the terrain and weather to

accomplish the objectives of reconnaissance and tying up the enemy's forces. Mosby was able to assess his operations and seek ways to improve them.

During one particular action, Mosby exhibited more of his leadership abilities. Mosby left on 31 March 1863 to capture Union picket posts in the vicinity of Dranesville, Virginia. Mosby learned from local residents that the picket post had been withdrawn approximately ten miles due to the weather. Mosby's understanding of his men, the weather, and the nature of his operations came into play here as a leader. He wrote, "I knew that if I dispersed the men without trying to do something I would never see them again."⁶⁴ Considering that his men and their horses were tired and cold, Mosby chose to stop and spend the night at a farm owned by the Miskels in Loudon County on 1 April 1863. Knowing that the nearest Union cavalry was approximately nine miles away, Mosby posted only one sentry to guard the horses. The Miskel farm was surrounded by streams and woods and was a potential trap for Mosby to be caught in. See figure 4. The 1st Vermont Cavalry, that had been bested at Herndon Station, were informed of Mosby's presence by Union sympathizers and they went to hunt him down. "Never before or after," exclaimed a guerrilla, "had the federal troops such another chance to secure Mosby and wipe out his men."⁶⁵ Fortunately for Mosby, one of his men was staying with friends and overheard the Federals when they stopped at that residence to confirm Mosby was at the Miskel farm. That man, Dick Moran, rode over the fields and warned Mosby at the same time the Union troops were entering the lane to the farm. As Mosby described:

Early the next morning one of my men, whom I had left over on the Leesburg pike, came dashing in, and announced the rapid approach of the enemy. But he had scarcely given us the information when the enemy appeared a few

Mosby's counterattack was initially on foot and then he was able to mount one of his men's horses. The Federals mistakenly charged with sabers while Mosby and his men responded with revolvers. The Federals broke in a frenzy. "Having seen the power of the Colt revolver in this second melee against the saber, never again would Mosby order a saber charge."⁶⁷

In this action Mosby demonstrated the ability to maintain control over himself and not get flustered when faced with possible capture. Mosby displayed initiative, judgement, and self-confidence when he chose to attack the Union cavalry rather than accept defeat or run. Mosby quickly assessed the situation and came up a viable course of action. He then motivated his men to execute that course of action in the face of insurmountable odds exhibiting his superb leadership abilities. Mosby was also honest enough to admit his mistakes and learn from them. He also realized the value of using the tactics of revolvers as he assessed his tactics and sought to improve them. The actions of Dick Moran demonstrate Mosby's development of his subordinates when Dick reacted by not fearing for himself but for Mosby and the others and warned them.

It would seem that Mosby was rash in his actions to charge the Union forces in such a bold and daring manner. Gutwald in his thesis suggests that Mosby did this because of the inadequacy he felt due to his frailness and his desire to prove otherwise. In his book, *The Power of Personality in War*, Major General Baron von Freytag-Loringhoven writes, "Audacity of itself has a powerful psychological effect on the enemy."⁶⁸ Major General Baron von Freytag-Loringhoven also used a quote from Clausewitz's *Campaign of 1812* to comment on this.

Immediate risks always exert a powerful influence on any man. A course of action can appear to be extremely rash until it is also seen as the only method of escape. Then it becomes a highly conservative course. Pure reason seldom causes a man to adopt an audacious course to save his command. Generally, this action is the result of an instinctive, inherent boldness that prompts one to reject surrender and seek a method of escape.⁶⁹

Mosby was not rash in his actions but he quickly realized the situation and determined the best course of action. He realized that using revolvers to charge an enemy equipped with sabers provided him the best chance for survival.

For his actions, and in particular the action that occurred at the Miskel Farm, Mosby was promoted to the rank of Major. In a two-week period, Mosby advanced from a lieutenant to a major. Over the next two months his unit grew until he had almost 100 men, but many of these soldiers were only attached to him for temporary duty.⁷⁰

At this point, Stuart became interested in General Hooker's, thenew Federal Commander, movements and ordered Mosby to conduct reconnaissance in the vicinity of Centreville.⁷¹ The very next day, 26 April 1863, Stuart directs Mosby to capture a train.

There is now a splendid opportunity to strike the enemy in rear of Warrenton Junction. The trains are running regularly to that point. (It may be by the time that you get this, the opportunity may have gone.) Capture a train, and interrupt the operation of the railroad. Stoneman's main body of cavalry is located near Warrenton Junction, Bealeton, and Warrenton Springs. Keep far enough from a brigade camp to give you time to get off your plunder and prisoners. Information of the movements of large bodies is of the greatest importance to us just now. The marching or transportation of divisions will often indicate the plan of a campaign. Be sure to give dates and numbers and names, as far as possible.⁷²

According to these orders, Mosby was authorized to confiscate and he had Stuart's blessing to do so. The orders also highlighted Stuart's reminder to Mosby to ensure the accuracy of the reconnaissance in providing details such as dates, and numbers. On 2 May 1863, Mosby attacked Warrenton Junction with approximately 100

men. They surprised a garrison camp of the 1st Virginia Cavalry (Union) there and after a short fight captured them. While saddling the Union horses and preparing equipment to be transported, Mosby and his men were surprised by reinforcements from the 1st Vermont and 5th New York Cavalry regiments as they arrived. Mosby's men were "entirely disorganized and dispersed over the fields, catching loose horses, [and] fugitive Yankees." Mosby attempted to reestablish command and control and rally his men but he failed and they fled and he was forced to retreat. Out of the 300 soldiers he originally captured, along with all of the regiment's horses and equipment, Mosby's men only were able to confiscate eight prisoners, and between twenty-five to thirty horses along with a large number of revolvers.⁷³

The action at Warrenton Junction was clearly a defeat for Mosby and his men. His failure to rally his men during this affair when compared to others was different because of the size of his unit. He admitted in his report that his men were scattered everywhere without any command and control. "He must have realized a hundred-man force is too unwieldy to execute an operation without organization into subordinate units."⁷⁴ The defeat also had an impact on the Union forces because "it broke Mosby's chain of successes and by doing so, destroyed the aura of invincibility which had begun to develop in Union minds. Although Mosby remained elusive and annoying, he could be beaten. This knowledge strengthened Federal incentive to continue trying to do so."⁷⁵

Mosby would continue his raids during the month of May on the highly valuable Orange and Alexandria Railroad, burning bridges, removing track, and causing a train derailment. He wrote Stuart that he had been unable to attack Federal railroad trains because he needed ammunition and he wanted Stuart to provide him with a mountain

howitzer. Mosby explained to Stuart that he had several artillerymen who would use it properly.⁷⁶ This showed Mosby was being innovative and displayed initiative as well as conceptual skills in thinking how best to attack the trains.

The twelve-pound bronze howitzer was delivered to Mosby before the end of May. Mosby assigned a team of his former artillerymen to the howitzer and they trained on it. Mosby planned a train ambush for the end of May. He and his men captured a train on the Orange and Alexandria Railroad in the vicinity of Catlett's Station. "The experienced partisans loosened a section of track on a curve. They tied a length of telegraph wire to the rail with the intention of jerking the rail from the bed as the train approached. A locomotive is more easily derailed on a critical portion of track, such as a curve. The twelve-car supply train screeched to a halt after the rail was pulled from the track."⁷⁷ The howitzer fired into the boiler of the locomotive effectively disabling it. The train was looted and then set ablaze.

When Mosby completed the destruction of the train, he realized that reinforcements were in his path of escape. Mosby had the howitzer fire into them, dispersing the troops momentarily. The regiments pursued Mosby and his men and Mosby continued to stop and fire a round into the pursuit force, momentarily stopping them several times. Mosby finally realized he could not escape the pursuit with the howitzer and he set the howitzer on a hill near Grapewood Farm. The hill overlooked the route the pursuit force was taking. As the Union horsemen moved along the road, they were formed four abreast constricted between high fences on either side. Mosby fired canister and then conducted a mounted charge which sent the Federals back.

The Union forces reorganized and Mosby executed the same maneuver two more times. Finally, Mosby and his men ran out of ammunition and had to leave the howitzer. "We did not then abandon it without a struggle, and a fierce hand-to-hand combat ensued in which, though overpowered by numbers, many of the enemy were made to bite the dust."⁷⁸ Although, Mosby had succeeded in destroying the train, he had lost a major weapon system, the howitzer, and he was forced to retreat. As a leader, Mosby had failed to plan for the large force that protected an important line of communication and the contingencies of a Federal pursuit.

A quick planner and organizer, Mosby employed the howitzer to aid in his retreat but in doing so he forfeited the gun. Mosby had also failed to realize the loss of surprise that occurred when using the howitzer and the effect that transporting the howitzer would have on his operation. "If a wagon or artillery piece is necessary for a particular mission, then it must be expedited to the safety of the rear, not used as part of a delaying rear guard action. Any towed or heavy equipment negates two factors that are critical to a partisan unit's success -- speed and mobility."⁷⁹ The howitzer required a heavily armed force to defend it and it prevented Mosby's men from dispersing to escape a pursuit force.

Mosby's leadership development progressed by the study of military literature, his mentorship by Stuart and the opportunity to observe Jones, Stuart and combat operations. His leadership development also progressed as he began to lead others on combat operations. Looking at the four leadership areas the U.S. Army uses, (values, attributes, skills, actions) an examination of Mosby at this point reveals the following:

1. Values which incorporate loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity, personal courage--in today's Army. During this time period values equated to the standards of personal conduct. Mosby demonstrated loyalty to his state when he reluctantly joined up and entered the war. His loyalty to Jones is evidenced by his actions of following orders to wear the uniform and also by his resignation of his commission and position of adjutant. Mosby's sense of duty was also exhibited by his entrance into the war for the state of Virginia. An argument could be made that his resignation demonstrates a lack of duty because he should have remained in the position of adjutant for Fitzhugh Lee. Mosby's loyalty to Jones and the lack of it for Lee may have superseded this and it ended up being for the best. During this period in our nation, there was a strong sense of state pride and duty to it. The standards by which Mosby lived during this time show that his values were what they ought to be. They reflected a moral, selfless individual who wanted to be of service to his commanders.

2. Attributes (mental, physical, and emotional). Earlier, mention was made of Mosby's physical frailties and how he constantly was pampered because of them and how he might have been more aggressive because of his fear of inadequacy. In his thesis, "Low Intensity Conflict As Practiced By John Singleton Mosby In The American Civil War," Rick Gutwald makes an interesting observation about Mosby's eyes. "He also had one very important physical trait, his piercing blue eyes. When Mosby was captured by the Union forces in 1862, the capturing officer included in his official report that Mosby, 'has a keen blue eye.' Another source mentions, 'His eyes, which did not glance but pierced, gave him added control, perhaps hypnotic, over his men.' . . . Mosby overcame his lack of physical stature by effectively using his piercing blue eyes. When one looked

in Mosby's eyes, one knew he meant business. Consider this statement, by one of Mosby's men, describing his first meeting with Mosby: 'He turned upon me suddenly, meeting my full glance. At that instant the secret of his power over his men was disclosed. It was in his eyes, which were deep blue, luminous, clear, piercing; when he spoke they flashed the punctuations of his sentence.'⁸⁰ Regardless of his eyes, Mosby did not exhibit the frailties from before in the way he carried himself or executed missions. Mosby performed all of the same duties as his men, leading by example. Mosby maintained control over his emotions and there is no evidence that he acted on them as he had in his youth. In some cases where Mosby might have gotten flustered because of the stress of battle, he remained clearheaded.

3. Skills (interpersonal, conceptual, technical, and tactical). During this period, Mosby learned the technical, and tactical knowledge base he needed. His tutelage under Jones, and later Stuart, provided him with the necessary skills to conduct reconnaissance and partisan operations that he needed while leading others. The technical skills he learned in his youth combined with the tactical experience he gained thus far show how a lawyer was able to lead others. He was given short notice of the McClellan reconnaissance mission and he quickly conceptualized the conduct of the operation. The development of tactics that Mosby created using rendezvous points, night and daylight to offset his lack of numbers are examples of the skills he was employing. Mosby also used the weather to his advantage by attacking during the rain and the cold. The successful tactic of charging an oncoming enemy was also discovered by Mosby in addition to the value of the revolver over the saber. The failure of Mosby to recognize the burden of the

howitzer on the Catlett's Station operation demonstrated that Mosby's skills did have some problems.

4. Actions (influencing, operating, improving). Mosby was very good at his decision-making skills and his ability to motivate others--whether leading by example or the force of his will. He learned how to quickly plan, organize, and execute missions. His operations also show that Mosby understood the necessity of operational security--he did not inform his subordinates of their mission until it was necessary (a good idea--considering the possibility of Union forces learning of his plans through their spy or informant network). His plan was flexible enough that he was able to adjust when the situation did not necessarily fit the plan. This occurred in Fairfax Court House when he had to go searching for General Stoughton because he was not where he originally thought he was.

Mosby did fail in his decision making at Miskel's farm by not having proper security and allowing himself and his men to be caught. This mistake was corrected by his quick assessment of the situation and his tactical decision to charge the 1st Vermont Cavalry and scatter them. Mosby continually assessed his operations and realized when to employ day or night attacks. He was improving his actions by his ability to learn the terrain and the tactics, techniques, and procedures that he developed that were useful to him. Mosby was also beginning to develop his subordinates. A case in point is Sergeant James F. Ames from the Stoughton Raid. Mosby's men did not trust this deserter but Mosby did, and he allowed him to lead a squad of men during the extremely dangerous mission. Mosby could have just used him as a guide but instead chose to use him as a subordinate leader, and he proved himself worthy of the job.

Mosby also allowed himself the reliance on more knowledgeable scouts. Mosby realized the importance of using such men to aid in his operations. Mosby was also building a team that would depend upon each other as demonstrated by Dick Moran's actions. Unlike other commands, Mosby could and did choose the men for the command. By doing this, Mosby was able to focus the development of these individuals into the kind of men needed for the partisan warfare. This is demonstrated by the discipline his troops were beginning to show. A night raid in which all of his men were able to quietly move on horseback maintaining noise and light discipline is a great example of this. He continued to note in his reports to Stuart his mistakes so it is possible to say that he was assessing himself and his operations.

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³²Davis, 154.

³³Mosby, 128.

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³⁶Davis, 156-157.

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³⁸Mosby, 133.

³⁹James A. Ramage, *Gray Ghost* (Lexington, KY: The University Press of Kentucky, 1999), 56-57.

⁴⁰Ramage, 57.

⁴¹Ibid., 61.

⁴²OR, vol. 25, pt. 1, 37-38.

⁴³Ibid., 1, 6.

⁴⁴Ramage, 63. Note: Colonel Wyndham was a former English officer commanding a cavalry brigade that had been attempting to capture Mosby and his guerrillas.

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⁴⁶Ibid., 68.

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⁶²Virgil C. Jones and Staff, 53.

⁶³*OR*, vol. 29, pt. 1, 81.

⁶⁴John S. Mosby, *Mosby's War Reminiscences and Stuart's Cavalry Campaigns* (New York, 1887), 101.

⁶⁵Wert, 53-54.

⁶⁶*OR*, vol. 29, pt. 1, 81.

⁶⁷Ramage, 79-82.

⁶⁸Major General Baron von Freytag-Loringhoven, *The Power of Personality In War* (Translated from the German: by the Historical Section, Army War College, Sep 1938, Under the Direction of BG (then COL Oliver L. Spaulding) Military Service Publishing Company, Harrisburg, PA), 31.

⁶⁹Ibid., 31.

⁷⁰F. Jones, 36.

⁷¹Author's note: General "Fighting Joe" Hooker was the new Federal commander. He crossed the Rappahannock River north of Fredericksburg and marched through the Wilderness to Chancellorsville. The Confederate forces flanked the Union forces, scoring a costly victory; *OR*, vol. 25, pt.2, 860.

⁷²Ibid.

⁷³*OR*, vol. 25, pt. 2, 861.

⁷⁴F. Jones, 37-38.

⁷⁵Carl Brent Beamer, "Gray Ghostbusters: Eastern Theatre Union Counterguerilla Operations in the Civil War, 1861-1865" (Ph.D. diss., Ohio State University, 1994), 146.

⁷⁶*OR*, vol. 25, pt. 2, 862.

⁷⁷F. Jones, 40.

⁷⁸Ibid., 39-41; Mosby, *Memoirs*, 197-198.

⁷⁹F. Jones, 41.

⁸⁰Gutwald, 24.

CHAPTER 4

COMMAND

The battalion that gradually grew up . . . was a pure case of evolution.¹

John S. Mosby, quoted in Jeffrey Wert's *Mosby's Rangers*

In June 1863, the Confederate War Department ordered the various partisan units to consolidate into battalions or regiments in order that the members of these irregular commands would be equal to the soldiers of the conventional forces.² On 10 June 1863, Major Mosby signed the papers organizing the 43rd Battalion of Virginia Cavalry as a subordinate unit of the Army of Northern Virginia.³ When the Confederate Congress passed the Confederate Military Law in 1862 one of the problems associated with it was that "It perpetuated the evil elective system for commissioned officers in the regimental grades. . . . Up to and including regimental commanders, officers were elected by vote of the enlisted men, who naturally inclined toward the most genial--seldom toward the most able-gentleman."⁴ Mosby did not like this system and he modified it to suit the needs of his command. "At election time, Mosby submitted to the rangers a list of officers he wanted chosen. Balloting, he directed, would be public, and every man who did not vote for his candidates would be immediately transferred to the cavalry of the army. Whereat, all hands voted loudly for the straight ticket."⁵ The practice of Mosby selecting his officers and then giving the list to his men to confirm became a procedure that Mosby would use for the rest of his command. "The noncommissioned officers were directly appointed by Mosby, which was the normal practice in the armies at the time. This procedure ensured Mosby's absolute confidence in his chain of command."⁶ This shows a brilliant way that Mosby was able to exhibit loyalty and duty for the law and yet

maintain effective administrative control over his command. His integrity might be questioned, however, because the vote only confirmed his choices and not those of his men. Mosby's command started with Company A, 43rd Battalion but over the next seven months he would add more companies and continue to fight a guerrilla war. "Company A would eventually grow into the 43d Battalion of Virginia Cavalry, which was actually a regimental-sized force with two battalions and eight companies. More than one thousand men would serve with Mosby by war's end; however, the active force was never larger than seven to eight hundred men at one time. Operationally, Mosby would never conduct a mission with more than 350 troopers."⁷

Mosby and his men generally operated in the northern section of Virginia. This area of operations included the Shenandoah Valley to the west of the Blue Ridge Mountains and the counties of Fauquier, Loudoun, Prince William, and Culpeper in the east. His area of operations was bordered by the Potomac River and Washington. Mosby and his men were familiar with the section of Virginia in which they operated and personally knew many of the people who gave them food, shelter and protection. Most of Mosby's operations were conducted in Loudoun, and Fauquier Counties of Virginia, sometimes called "Mosby's Confederacy," due to the amount of influence he exercised over this area. See figure 5 for Mosby's Confederacy. "A Federal strategic objective was the occupation and pacification of this area to support the drive on Richmond and protection of lines of communication."⁸ The area that Mosby operated in was ideal for partisan operations. Throughout the counties were many small secluded farms that offered concealment and support.

The mountainous terrain running through the area offered concealment, approach and escape routes, and unrestricted observation of the Union forces. The road network of the area provided rapid mobility for the partisans and they were able to capitalize on their knowledge of the terrain. The Union forces also depended heavily upon this area.

The confluence of several river, railroad, and road systems contributed to the area's strategic importance. The Baltimore and Ohio (B&O) railroad was a vital link for the Union. It ran over five hundred miles from Baltimore through Harper's Ferry, Martinsburg (WV), Cumberland (MD), to Wheeling (on the Ohio River). Two important spurs were the Baltimore-Washington (31 miles) and the Harper's Ferry -- Winchester (32 miles). The rail line was a strategic link for manpower from the western territories and garrisons, foodstuffs, lumber, ore, and other resources. . . . Federal operations in Virginia depended on extended lines of communication running through Mosby's Confederacy.⁹

A Demanding Summer

After signing the papers creating his command, Mosby led his men on a mission to conduct a night attack on two Union cavalry companies near Seneca Mills, Maryland. Mosby established a policy of immediately conducting operations after he formed a command and he continued to do this throughout the rest of the war. During the movement the guide he used became misoriented and Mosby was delayed in crossing the Potomac at night; he was forced to cross it at daylight. Union forces, numbering between eighty and one hundred soldiers, were alerted by his crossing and prepared to meet him. Having lost the element of surprise, Mosby charged the Federals effectively driving them back from their positions for several miles. Mosby and his men then returned to the Union encampment and destroyed their equipment. Mosby's losses were minimal, but the losses were two of his officers.

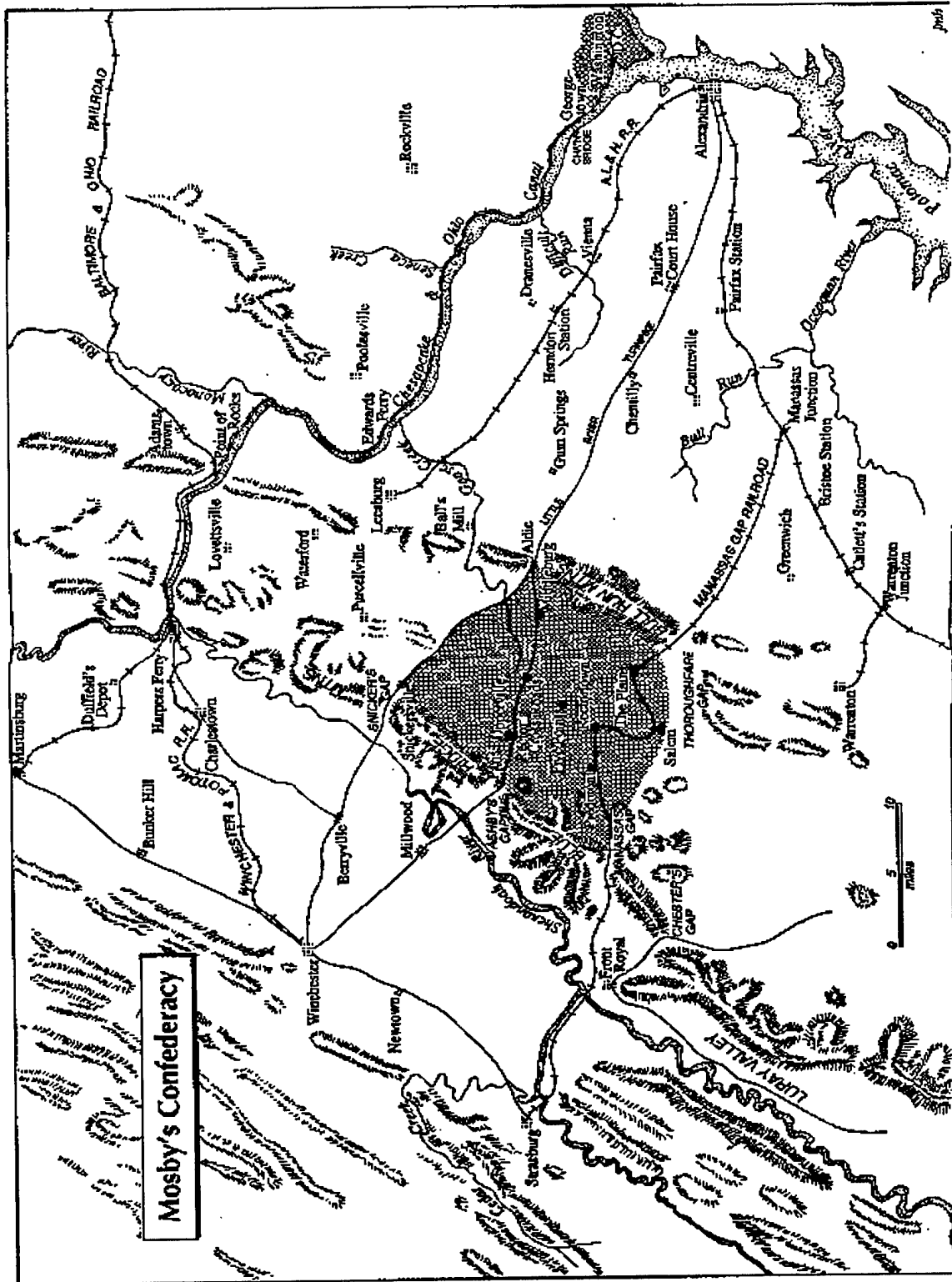


Figure 5. Mosby's Confederacy. Source: James A. Ramage's *The Gray Ghost*, inside cover.

In the endorsement of Mosby's report, Stuart recommended Mosby for promotion. This was Mosby's first combat operation where he had an organized command and he realized that the command authority he held was important because he maintained discipline and cohesion "during the looting and the retreat."¹⁰

Mosby's judgment in this action was flawed by his decision to proceed to conduct a daylight attack when he planned for a night operation. The decision to continue may have been based upon his desire to build confidence in his unit and men. He realized his mistake when he met a force that was prepared for him. Only his quick thinking and successful tactic of charging the Federal forces probably saved his unit from defeat.

Mosby's leadership abilities were now being tested as the commander of a much larger unit. Using J. E. B. Stuart as a role model, he had developed his command presence. A command presence was the style and appearance that a commander set for his unit. It was displayed in how the leader looked, acted, and in the way he led his unit. A small, thin man, Mosby wore an ostrich plume in his hat and sometimes even a gray cape with a scarlet lining in public. During his operations he wore the same gray uniform as his rangers. Although the way a leader dressed should not have been important, it did establish the dashing flair that Mosby needed to attract attention to himself and his men. Ramage asserts in his book that the different sides that Mosby exhibited in his youth appeared when he was in command. "With his soldiers and with friends and family he was kind and generous, and when his gentle side was ascendant his smile was warm, his dark blue eyes twinkled with charm, and he spoke in a voice low and soft. . . . But in the presence of the enemy or in times of conflict, Mosby's appearance and manner changed. . . His manner became taciturn and his enemies said he was cold-hearted and cruel."¹¹

It was his great comprehension of the situations he faced and his internal motivation, however, that made him a formidable foe. "He was described as a plain soldier . . . ready to talk, to laugh, to ride, to oblige you in any way--such was Mosby in outward aspect. . . .The commonplace exterior concealed one of the most active, daring, restless minds of an'epoch fruitful in such. His activity of mind--restless, with eternal love of movement--was something wonderful."¹² Mosby's command presence dictated that his men had the appearance of the dashing cavalrymen but they were ruthless in combat.

The Confederate Army had started to advance northward for what was the beginning of the Gettysburg Campaign. Operating as part of Stuart's cavalry, the 43rd Battalion conducted a screen on the army's right flank in the vicinity of Fauquier County. On 17 June 1863 Mosby observed Union forces maneuvering from Fredericksburg to check the Confederate Army's advance. Under cover of darkness, Mosby moved into the Union lines posing as Union troops.¹³ Finding two officers of General Hooker's staff resting at an unguarded house, Mosby and his men captured them and their bag of documents which laid out in detail the Union plan, locations and sizes of units, and confirmed the Union lack of intelligence collection on the Confederate Army's location. This was a major intelligence capture for Mosby and he realized the value of the information. He quickly sent the information to Stuart along with the prisoners. The information took Stuart directly into the mind of Hooker; it was as if Stuart had overheard Hooker giving a briefing to his cavalry chief. . . . Once more Mosby had proved to be a valuable scout."¹⁴ This operation showed that Mosby exhibited sound judgment in the realization of the value of the information and the necessity to send it to

his superiors. His employment of sound judgment and logical reasoning demonstrated good decision-making actions and these actions influenced his superiors.

For the next several days Mosby conducted reconnaissance for Stuart, who was looking for a route into Maryland. Mosby's reconnaissance enabled him to advise Stuart that the Union camps were scattered and that it was possible for him to ride between Hooker's army and Washington. Mosby suggested that Stuart use the same ford that he himself had used on the Seneca Mills operation. Stuart attempted to use the ford but found it blocked by Union forces and he was forced to spend two days searching for a crossing site. When Mosby learned that the crossing at Seneca Mills ford did not occur he assumed that Stuart had maneuvered to link up with Lee's army. However, Stuart did not ride to the west and linkup and his absence and the interpretation of his orders have been the subject of controversy since.

For his part, Mosby gathered his men and moved into southern Pennsylvania attempting to find Lee's army. Not able to find the Confederate Army, he conducted a raid between 28 June and 1 July 1863 into Pennsylvania, capturing horses and cattle, and returned to Virginia.¹⁵ This is another example of Mosby's demonstration of conceptual skills, decision making, and executing actions. Mosby provided Stuart with the intelligence he needed. Mosby could be criticized for not attempting to find Lee and provide him with additional reconnaissance, which potentially could have aided him in his campaign. Not knowing where his superiors were, or the predicament they faced, Mosby undertook a small raid thereby preserving his force. This action may have been more for his unit's benefit than really in support of any superior's goals.

As the commander of the unit, Mosby had to make the best use of stealth in order to accomplish its missions. One of his techniques was in the choice of weapons the unit used.

Mosby realized early in the war, the value of the revolver over the saber and he made sure that his men knew what equipment to carry. Mosby was photographed with a cavalry saber, which was probably taken more for effect than actual portrayal. Mosby's men primarily used two Colt revolvers. He did not allow his men to carry canteens or loose equipment that would compromise his stealth. This demonstrates not only his tactical competence but also his decision making as he used logical reasoning to do this.

Mosby used simple tactics that were easily understood and followed. He had one maxim that he used: "If you are going to fight, then be the attacker. That is an old principle, and it is also my own principle."¹⁶ Mosby understood that surprise combined with the shock effect of mounted revolver charge were the key components of success for his operations.¹⁷ He had a unique way of controlling his men and executing a mission. He knew that he could use a small group of men to attack a much larger force using the element of surprise. He realized that this was the only way to conduct operations successfully. Mosby used the night and the weather to cover his movement striking sometimes in the worst of conditions. Sometimes he waited to attack when he knew the enemy was sleeping late at night or early in the morning. He also knew that once the element of surprise was lost time worked against him as the enemy consolidated and reorganized to counterattack. "By this time Union reinforcements had appeared, and when they rode into view, Mosby blew a shrill blast on a little whistle he carried for that purpose, and the Rangers scattered in all directions as was their custom when

overpowered.”¹⁸ His tactics made for plans that were appropriately simple and readily understood by his subordinates. This was an excellent example of planning, and executing actions.

Another technique that Mosby employed was a network of safe houses that he and his men could use for safe hiding from the Union forces. The locals provided Mosby and his men with warnings and intelligence of Federal movements. This network operated continuously using various signaling methods, from a light placed in a window to a boy running across a field. It was invaluable and the information it provided gave Mosby much of his success.¹⁹

During the months of July and August 1863, Mosby conducted numerous small raids on Union supply trains and sutler’s wagons, at one point collecting 141 prisoners and 123 horses and mules.²⁰ Sutler’s wagons were wagons filled with supplies that were sold by independent contractors to the soldiers, sometimes at exorbitant prices. The partisans enjoyed attacking the wagons because they contained vast amounts of food and luxuries. They even shared them with some of their Union prisoners who relished the idea that they were getting back at the contractors who overcharged for their wares. During one operation on 13 July, Mosby attacked twenty-eight sutler’s wagons but was unable to get away from a Union pursuit force and he was forced to abandon the wagons.²¹

At this point General Lee received reports that Mosby and his men were not following his intent of attacking the railroads and he also received a false report that Mosby’s men had auctioned off supplies they had captured.²² Mosby’s efforts were focused on attacking the lucrative wagons because they were easier targets than the

railroads. The Orange and Alexandria Railroad was heavily guarded and Mosby had a limited number of men. Mosby believed he was achieving the same deprivation of supplies to the Union army by attacking the wagons in accordance with his superior's intent but Lee did not.²³ Lee rebuked Mosby in an endorsement of his operations and he also sent a letter to Stuart.

I greatly commend his boldness and good management, which is the cause of his success. I have heard that he has now with him a large number of men, yet his expeditions are undertaken with very few, and his attention seems more directed to the capture of sutlers' wagons, &c., than to the injury of the enemy's communications and outposts. The capture and destruction of wagon trains is advantageous, but the supply of the Federal Army is carried on by the railroad. If that should be injured, it would cause him to detach largely for its security, and thus weaken his main army. His threat of punishing citizens on the line for such attacks must be met by meting similar treatment to his soldiers when captured.

I do not know the cause for undertaking his expeditions with so few men, whether it is from policy or the difficulty of collecting them. I have heard of his men, among them officers, being in rear of this army selling captured goods, sutlers' stores, &c. This had better be attended to by others. It has also been reported to me that many deserters from this army have joined him. Among them have been seen members of the Eighth Virginia Regiment. If this is true, I am sure it must be without the knowledge of Major Mosby, but I desire you to call his attention to this matter, to prevent his being imposed on.²⁴

Mosby understood the value of attacking these wagon trains and that attraction these operations would have on his men. His command was based on the Partisan Ranger Act and the men expected that they could enjoy the spoils of this warfare. "Shrewdly, Mosby refused to participate in the division of spoils. He used captured weapons and rode captured horses. . . . He was careful to avoid any appearance of impropriety, going to the extreme of not owning or wearing a watch until after the war."²⁵ By not exposing himself to situations where his integrity could have the perception of being questioned Mosby established a good example for his subordinates.

On 24 August 1863 Mosby gathered approximately thirty men to attack the railroad in accordance with Lee's intent. He conducted a reconnaissance on the railroad trestles he intended to burn and discovered one hundred Union horses that were guarded by approximately fifty men. Mosby decided to attack the Union escort and steal the horses and wait to destroy the bridges at nighttime. Mosby divided his command, placing half of it under the direction of one of his lieutenants while he commanded the rest. The lieutenant's group charged the front of the escort and Mosby attacked the rearward section. Mosby's tactics caught the Union troops in a crossfire and they were forced to surrender.

Unfortunately for Mosby, he was shot in the side and also in the thigh. Mosby was taken to a nearby wood and he was treated by a surgeon that he had recruited for his command. "Mosby, despite the loss of blood and the pain, acted hurriedly, reforming the group, assigning guards for the horses and moving out before a pursuit force appeared."²⁶ Mosby succeeded in capturing eighty-five of the horses; and before he was taken away, he ordered his lieutenant to burn the bridges. The lieutenant was only able to burn to one of them. While Mosby was absent from his command recuperating, his lieutenant attacked Union outposts near Waterloo and Warrenton Junction, capturing wagons, horses, and prisoners.²⁷

His lieutenant's actions demonstrated that Mosby had developed him into a good subordinate leader who was able to continue operations in his absence. This also demonstrated Mosby's abilities as a leader. He realized the value of capturing the horses and the effect their loss would have on the Union. The flexibility he exhibited in changing his plan during execution showed that he used sound judgment, logical

reasoning, and tactical proficiency. His abilities were further demonstrated by the trust he placed in his lieutenant to continue the operation. He was improving his command, building confidence in his junior leadership, and continuing to develop them. He impressively overcame the physical hardship of being wounded and remained effective as the leader of the unit, a definitive example of Mosby's dedication to mission accomplishment and his physical stamina.

While Mosby was absent, rumors circulated that he had died of his wounds. The eventual return of Mosby to the battlefield made him appear that much more invincible in the Union forces minds. During his recovery, Mosby visited with Secretary of War James Seddon and also with General Lee to maintain support for his operations. "Lee treated him kindly and said that he was greatly satisfied with Mosby's conduct. He apologized for jumping to a conclusion on the rumor of the Charlottesville sale. . . . Lee suggested that he attempt to capture prominent Union officials."²⁸ Mosby rejoined his command by the end of the month and he conducted a reconnaissance operation into Alexandria capturing a Union colonel and burning a railroad bridge. Stuart praised his actions and again recommended him for promotion.

Respectfully forwarded, and recommended that Major Mosby be promoted another grade in recognition of his valuable services. The capture of these prominent Union officials, as well as the destruction of bridges, trains, &c. , was the subject of special instructions which he is faithfully carrying out.²⁹

In his endorsement of Mosby's report, Lee stated that he was "entitled to great credit for his boldness and skill in his operations against the enemy. He keeps them in constant apprehension and inflicts repeated injuries."³⁰ He also stated that he did not think that Mosby's command was large enough yet to warrant the rank of lieutenant

colonel.³¹ These actions show that Mosby continued to follow orders and he realized the necessity of maintaining support from his superiors for his operations.

Growth of a Battalion

On 1 October 1863 Mosby assembled his men near Scuffleburg and he assigned sixty of them to Company B, 43rd Battalion, Virginia Cavalry. He conducted an election as he had previously with the men only confirming the officers he selected.³² In keeping with his practice of establishing confidence in the command, he sent Company B on a raid the very next day and they succeeded in capturing six prisoners and twenty-seven horses with no losses.³³

Mosby spent the majority of October capturing prisoners, horses and mules and conducting reconnaissance for Stuart. On 26 October 1863 he conducted another daring operation. Mosby with fifty of his men infiltrated the Union lines near Warrenton pretending to be Union soldiers. They moved to a remote portion of the Warrenton and Gainesville Turnpike that they had previously scouted. Mosby observed a wagon train of approximately forty to fifty wagons that were escorted by two separate Union forces that protected only the front and rear of the wagon convoy. Mosby determined the best course of action was to attack the wagons in the center and leave before the Union forces could counterattack. Posing as Union officials Mosby and his men stopped the center of the wagon train without the wagon drivers raising an alarm. Union cavalry arrived before Mosby could destroy the wagons but he was able to capture 145 horses and mules, and a number of prisoners without firing a shot.³⁴ Mosby used the tactics of infiltration to surprise the Union forces instead of placing his men at risk by boldly attacking. This

demonstrated that Mosby had assessed his previous mistakes and learned from them. He adapted to the situation and improved his tactical proficiency.

On 7 December 1863, Mosby called for a meeting of his men in Rectortown. Here, he formed Company C of the 43rd Battalion, Virginia Cavalry and conducted elections as he had previously. Mosby also presented to his men membership cards signed by him recognizing the holder as a member of his command.³⁵ Mosby conducted an operation with this new company on Brandy Station along the Orange and Alexandria Railroad. Mosby discovered that the Union forces had placed a heavy guard force along the rail line and constructed fortified positions at stations and bridges. Mosby's mission succeeded in only capturing prisoners.³⁶

Mosby only conducted limited operations during December of 1863. The weather turned very cold and the strength of the Union forces prevented Mosby from conducting anything other than the capture of prisoners and some supplies. Mosby and his men spent a large amount of time resting and organizing.³⁷ It is important to mention Mosby's men and his discipline because he was relying on them and their conduct as they stayed with supporters in the countryside.

Although for the most part good fighting men, his rangers were, in some ways, the "featherbed soldiers" they were accused of being. They were strangers to camp routine. They slept not outdoors but in comfortable quarters provided by a sympathetic populace. They seldom even made coffee for themselves, let alone fired bacon, soaked hardtack, or washed a shirt. Most couldn't pitch a tent and didn't know the first thing about cavalry drill. . . . In fact, it was the ranger's very lack of regimentation that made them successful; they were encouraged to think for themselves. Boarding with local families made for as many obligations as privileges. Off-duty rangers were, in the Southern tradition, expected to act as gentlemen, and their commander made it clear that violations of this trust would receive his personal attention. A man who broke into a Quaker milkhouse was sent immediately to the regular army, despite the intercession of his astounded captain.³⁸

On 1 January 1864, Company B skirmished with a Union cavalry force commanded by Major Henry Cole near Rectortown. The Union force had spent the previous month searching for Mosby in the cold. The Union force was routed and lost half of its eighty-man force during a fierce gunfight. One of Stuart's scouts, Captain Frank Stringfellow, approached Mosby about a week after this skirmish with a plan to attack this same Union cavalry force. Mosby accepted the plan and three days later he moved his force to link up with Stringfellow's. The plan called for Stringfellow to lead Mosby's men to a position that overlooked the Union cavalry camp in the vicinity of Loudoun Heights at nighttime. Stringfellow's force was supposed to silently surround the Union commander's house, and capture him. In conjunction with Stringfellow's actions Mosby was supposed to attack and capture the horses.

Moving to the vicinity of the Union camp on the night of 9 January, Mosby and his men got into position, and a shot was fired that ruined the element of surprise. Stringfellow's force moving to capture Cole, discovered the building was empty and a Union force that began firing at them from defensive positions. Stringfellow's troops retreated into Mosby's force which, in turn, fired upon them, unfortunately wounding several of Stringfellow's men. Mosby's men began firing without discretion as the Union troops organized a heavy defense. Mosby was forced to retreat and, in the process, two of his best officers were killed.³⁹ Mosby used good conceptual and tactical skills in conducting the initial approach to the camp. He again used his tactic of darkness and he did it on a night where the temperature was almost zero degrees Fahrenheit almost ensuring an element of surprise. His actions demonstrated that he planned and prepared the mission with Stringfellow but failed to fully coordinate all of the actions necessary for

two units to operate in conjunction with one another. After this affair, he and Stringfellow would accuse each other of firing the shots that destroyed the operation. The lack of coordination between the two units was apparent when Stringfellow's men retreated into Mosby's force. In Stuart's endorsement of Mosby's report, he stated his support for Mosby.

The conduct of Major Mosby is warmly commended to the notice of the commanding general. His sleepless vigilance and unceasing activity have done the enemy great damage. He keeps a large force of the enemy's cavalry continually employed in Fairfax in the vain effort to suppress his inroads. His exploits are not surpassed in daring and enterprise by those of *petite guerre* in any age. Unswerving devotion to duty, self-abnegation, and unflinching courage, with a quick perception and appreciation of the opportunity, are the characteristics of this officer. Since I first knew him in 1861 he has never once alluded to his own rank or promotion; thus far it has come by the force of his own merit. While self-consciousness of having done his duty well is the patriot soldier's best reward, yet the evidence of the appreciation of his country is a powerful incentive to renewed effort, which should not be undervalued by those who have risen to the highest point of military and civic eminence. That evidence is promotion. If Major Mosby has not won it, no more can daring deeds essay to do it.⁴⁰

The battalion was upset over the loss of their two officers and Mosby suspended operations after this. He placed one of his captains, William Chapman, in command, granted leave to a number of the men, and then took leave himself to visit with his family.⁴¹

Upon his return, Mosby reorganized his companies and gave them sections of the area to patrol. Company A covered the eastern portion of the area south of Middleburg. Company B covered the northern avenues of approach from Bloomfield to Upperville. Company C covered the southern avenues of approach from White Plains to Salem. This surveillance protected Mosby's men against surprise raids from the Union cavalry as they

rested in local houses and farms.⁴² On 21 January 1864 General Lee recommended him for promotion.

During the past year Major Mosby, of the Partisan Rangers, has been very- active in harassing the rear of the Federal army operating in Northern Virginia. He is zealous, bold, and skillful and with very small resources has accomplished a great deal. I beg leave therefore to recommend his promotion to be lieutenant-colonel under the act approved April 21, 1862, authorizing the President to commission such officers as he may deem proper, with authority to form bands of partisan rangers, in companies, battalions, or regiments. I do this in order to show him that his services have been appreciated, and to encourage him to still greater activity and zeal.⁴³

Lee's recommendation shows the pride he felt for Mosby. It also revealed his knowledge of Mosby's leadership qualities and potential as a full-fledged battalion commander. The usefulness of the partisan units to the Confederate forces became the subject of debate in the Confederate chain of command. In a letter to General Stuart, dated 11 January 1864, General Rosser stated his complaint.

During the time that I have been in the valley I have had ample opportunity of judging of the efficiency and usefulness of the many irregular bodies of troops which occupy this country and known as partisans, &c., and am prompted by no other feeling than a desire to serve my country to inform you that they are a nuisance and an evil to the service. Without discipline, order, or organization, they roam broadcast over the country, a band of thieves, stealing, pillaging, plundering, and doing every manner of mischief and crime. They are a terror to the citizens and an injury to the cause. They never fight; can't be made to fight. Their leaders are generally brave, but few of the men are good soldiers, and have engaged in this business for the sake of gain. . . . Major Mosby is of inestimable service to the Yankee army in keeping their men from straggling. He is a gallant officer, and is one that I have great respect for; yet the interest I feel in my own command and the good of the service coerces me to bring this matter before you, in order that this partisan system, which I think is a bad one, may be corrected.⁴⁴

In the endorsements, Stuart praised Mosby but agreed with Rosser stating, "Major Mosby's command is the only efficient band of rangers I know of, and he usually operates with only one-fourth of his nominal strength. Such organizations, as a rule, are

detrimental to the best interests of the army at large.”⁴⁵ General Lee in his endorsement recommended that the Partisan Ranger Act be rescinded and the Confederate Congress enacted a law on 17 February that directed all partisan units to unite with other units into battalions or regiments and it granted the Secretary of War the ability to maintain certain units operating in the Federal lines.⁴⁶ General Lee, in a letter to General S. Cooper, the Adjutant, and Inspector General, on 1 April 1864, singled out Mosby’s unit. He recommended that other partisan units be disbanded but wrote: “Lieutenant-Colonel Mosby has done excellent service, and from the reports of citizens and others I am inclined to believe that he is strict in discipline and a protection to the country in which he operates. . . . With the single exception mentioned [Mosby], I hope the order will be issued at once disbanding the companies and battalions [partisan rangers] serving in this department.”⁴⁷ Secretary of War Seddon in his endorsement of this letter stated that he wanted Mosby’s unit to remain as partisan rangers.⁴⁸ The Confederate command debated the fate of all the partisan units but they realized the value of Mosby’s unit due to his leadership and opted to maintain it.

Lieutenant Colonel Mosby now had the rank of a battalion commander. In the middle of February, one of his men had a disagreement with Mosby and his quartermaster over reimbursement for ammunition the man had transported. This ranger, John Cornwall, deserted, fled to the Union troops and led them to many of the ranger hideouts. The Federals captured 28 men and 200 horses during one raid, and in doing so, captured the largest amount of Mosby’s men at one time that they ever would.⁴⁹ While not necessarily a leadership failure, it exhibited a deficiency because Mosby was not able to exercise complete control over his men. This was in part due to the freedom he

allowed his men to have when they were not conducting operations. Men were drawn to Mosby for glory, fame, and riches. The last was something that could not be found in the regular army. Mosby attempted to weed out individuals who did not conduct themselves properly when off duty but in at least this case he was unsuccessful. If he had tried to keep his men in a regular supervised encampment he probably would have been captured or defeated. The tactic he chose of dispersing his men and leaving them to their own accounting most likely prevented his command from being captured as a whole. Unfortunately, the trust he placed in his men was unhinged by the actions of one man.

Mosby's next operation was a complicated ambush. On 21 February, Mosby conducted a reconnaissance and discovered that a Union force was camped on a farm near Leesburg and that they would be returning to their camp in Vienna. The Union force consisted of approximately 150 men moving along the Alexandria Turnpike. Mosby placed an observer down the road at a fork to determine if the Union force would come straight down the road or turn at the fork onto an alternate road. If the Union forces used the alternate route, he would move back through the woods and reestablish the ambush along this route. He put twenty dismounted men with rifles to attack from the woods alongside of the turnpike. He placed seventy men hidden in woods near Alexandria to attack the front of the unit. He sent his remaining men to conceal themselves in the woods and attack the rear of the Union force.

During his reconnaissance, Mosby noted that the Union force used a forward security element in front of the main body. Mosby planned to stop this element, make the Union force close up with the forward element and place the entire Union force in his ambush. To stop the forward element, he ordered one of his lieutenants to take two men

and have them mount their horses on the road opposite the main ambush site. The men were supposed to strike up a conversation with the Union troops and as the Union force closed up, the attack would commence. Mosby would attack from the front, the dismounts would fire on the flank, and Chapman's force would attack from the rear. The plan was executed brilliantly and the Union force was soon overcome. "Surprised and confounded, with no time to form, they made but feeble resistance, and were perfectly overwhelmed by the shock of the charge. They fled in every direction in the wildest confusion, leaving on the field at least 15 killed and a considerable number wounded, besides 70 prisoners in our hands, with all their horses, arms, and equipments."⁵⁰

This ambush was an excellent example of Mosby's conceptual skills and operating actions. He used creative thinking to develop an acceptable plan, and he executed it with logical reasoning. He also developed contingencies, which also demonstrated his ability to learn and adapt to the situation. His subordinates' roles exhibit his building actions and the development that he did with them.

During the month of March 1864, Mosby was challenged with an enlistment problem. He discovered that a recruiter in Richmond was "enrolling recruits for Mosby's 43rd Battalion and sending them to Mosby. This practice rankled Mosby."⁵¹ He wrote to Stuart on 26 March asking,

Please grant no papers to any man coming to join my command unless he can furnish evidence of having been recruited by an agent of mine. The enrolling officer in Richmond has assumed to enlist men for me, and I have had the trouble of sending them back. Please have the inclosed paper returned to him. You can very readily understand how necessary it is for success in my operations to have none but first-rate men.⁵²

Mosby realized that the men who served with him and for him had to be chosen by him. A man who served with Mosby had to demonstrate loyalty to the command, be self-motivated, use initiative, and most importantly he had to have fearless courage. To build the teamwork that was necessary for a command like Mosby's there was no other avenue of recruitment. This may have seemed selfish for Mosby to ask this of Stuart, but Stuart himself had given Mosby guidance on how to select the men necessary for his command. The special operations community today selected their members based on criteria instead of allowing recruiters to do it for them.

Mosby formed his next company on 1 April 1864. He gathered his men at Paris and conducted his customary elections or ratification establishing Company D, 43rd Battalion Virginia Cavalry. When he presented the officers names for election, the unit members grumbled. Mosby responded by informing them that anyone who did not want to follow these officers could go and serve in the regular army. No one took Mosby's offer.⁵³

During the month of April, Mosby and his companies foraged for food, supplies, and horses and conducted scouting missions for Lee and Stuart. In a report, Mosby summarized his operations during this time period by saying that "few opportunities were offered for making any successful attacks on the enemy, the continual annoyances to which they had been subjected during the winter causing them to exert great vigilance in guarding against surprises and interruptions of their communications."⁵⁴ General Lee highlighted his accomplishments, even though limited, in his endorsement of Mosby's report.

Attention is invited to the activity and skill of Colonel Mosby, and the intelligence and courage of the officers and men of his command, as displayed in this report. With the loss of little more than 20 men, he has killed, wounded, and captured during the period embraced in the report about 1,200 of the enemy, and taken more than 1,600 horses and mules, 230 beef-cattle, and 85 wagons and ambulances, without counting many smaller operations. The services rendered by Colonel Mosby and his command in watching and reporting the enemy's movements have also been of great value. His operations have been highly creditable to himself and his command.⁵⁵

Featherbed Guerillas

Mosby's Men were dispersed throughout the counties of Loudoun and Fauquier when not conducting missions. Locations well known to the men were designated as rendezvous points from which they would stage their operations. If it was essential that the men meet before a designated time or place, or if one had not been established, then messengers went throughout the county and informed the command. Using intelligence gathered from local civilians or after a reconnaissance by himself or some of his men, Mosby gathered his men to conduct the operation. "Once Mosby selected a target and formulated a plan, he drafted a message which appointed a time and place for a rendezvous. If circumstances warranted, he gave his men three days notice of a meeting."⁵⁶ This is a great example of how Mosby was able to administratively control his organization using all relevant facts and information to plan and organize his missions.

Mosby's unique command required that Mosby be given a lot of latitude to conduct missions with little guidance from his superiors. Some commanders might have been hesitant to allow a subordinate this much freedom to maneuver. Stuart and Lee understood this, and they recognized within Mosby the ability to effectively command this type of organization without allowing it to become a band of thieves. "Mosby was

acting under direct orders of General Stuart up to the time of his death, and then under General Lee, and was independent only in the sense that both Lee and Stuart had such confidence in him that they permitted him to act on his own discretion. In fact it would have been folly to hamper him with orders or place him under restrictions when he was so far separated from the main army, and at time so situated that he could with difficulty communicate with his superiors."⁵⁷ It was fortunate for Mosby that he was given the discretion to lead this way and also that he was seen as being successful in their eyes.

Mosby also realized his ability to influence the area of operations by providing law enforcement. Mosby and his men policed the counties that gave them safe haven. For approximately two years Mosby enforced the civil law in upper Fauquier and southern Loudoun counties. Lee commended him for these actions earlier when he recommended him for promotion. He viewed the powers the residents gave him as a "trust."⁵⁸ As a lawyer before the war, he fulfilled the need for law enforcement due to the war's interruption of the civilian legal system. Mosby was judge and jury using his men as witnesses to the hearings. Mosby also policed the area always on the lookout for horse and cattle thieves. Mosby's men destroyed distilleries and rounded up deserters from the regular army.⁵⁹ Destroying the distilleries may have been a part of his abstinence that he had learned while as a youth. The citizens of the counties appreciated it as well as the Confederate government. In a note to the Commissary-General, the Chief Commissary of Subsistence for Virginia asked for Mosby to receive authorization to assist in confiscating black-market items. In the note he stated, "ask that instructions be given to Lieutenant-Colonel Mosby to aid the officers of this bureau in putting down this unlawful trade by seizing the cotton and tobacco which have been passed through the lines without

proper permit. . . . I have spoken to Lieutenant-Colonel Mosby on this subject, and he will cheerfully, if authorized, render the desired aid.”⁶⁰ Mosby was also asked continuously for his muster rolls to show whether or not he was allowing conscripts into his command. “Major General James Kemper, commander of the Reserve Forces of Virginia, interceded on Mosby’s behalf, writing to Lee: “Col. Mosby has manifested so much interest in enforcing conscription, his cooperation in this respect is of such value and the importance of his command in all respects is so great.”⁶¹ These actions displayed Mosby’s great ability to be sensitive to the needs of the people for whom he was fighting and also to the politics of his partisan command. If Mosby had not supported his superiors’ policies, he would have lost their support for him. These actions also show that he had a great amount of control and influence over the counties in which he conducted law enforcement. “Edward Marshall of Markham wrote to the Richmond Examiner during Mosby’s tenure, stating: ‘Old Fauquier was now under the reign of a king, who heard petitions, settled disputes, and by his justice and legal knowledge gained universal approbation, and that the section of the county had never during the memory of man been so cheaply and ably governed.’ ”⁶²

An example of Mosby’s influence over the area can also be seen in the correspondence of his superiors to him about reports of a United States Marshal that was supposed to be operating in Mosby’s Confederacy. Secretary Seddon wrote General Lee inquiring, “I am reliably informed that the U.S. marshal, with a guard, is in Loudoun County, near Leesburg, serving notices on tenants and others, so as to stop the rents of lands and houses for the benefit of that Government.”⁶³ Mosby’s response through the chain of command, “Respectfully returned, with the information that the honorable

Secretary of War has been misinformed. No Federal foot presses the soil of Loudoun.”⁶⁴

Mosby may have been boasting, but he exerted a great amount of control over the area and everyone, civilian, Confederate, and Union knew this. It could have been easy for Mosby to become a tyrant. Some people, notably Union troops and sympathizers, viewed him as one. To his supporters he was not and this showed that his values kept him in check.

Mosby ruled his unit very sternly. His ideas of discipline were probably influenced by his early days serving under Captain Jones. He surely found a good leadership example in General Lee. Writing after the war about the “superior morality of the Confederates at Gettysburg,” Mosby stated “General Lee’s order was issued, not from any feelings of tenderness toward the Pennsylvanians, but to preserve the morale and discipline of his army.”⁶⁵ Mosby would not allow any “breaches of proper conduct” and when he found out about a transgression, he would either admonish the individual or return him to a regular unit in the army.⁶⁶ Mosby was only strict about his men’s conduct when not on a mission, attendance on missions, and the election process. “He permitted freedom in off-duty time and on raids allowed each man to make full use of his talents. There was no saluting or addressing officers by rank except that everyone called Mosby by his rank. There were no inspections, no guard duty, and no drills.”⁶⁷ This is an example of how Mosby capitalized on the ranger’s rebellious nature using it to his advantage as part of the leader–follower development. Mosby maintained control over his men and set a good example for the locals so that Mosby’s men were viewed as an asset by his superiors and they allowed him to continue operations as the debate over the use of partisan units continued.

Mosby was also able to use the mission of the partisan rangers to assist in influencing those who were subordinate to him. As one of his soldiers wrote,

All cattle and mules were turned over to the Confederate Government, but horses captured were distributed among the men making the capture. When it is borne in mind that the men had to arm, equip and support themselves, this did not leave a very heavy surplus, as we received but little aid from the government. . . . The acquisition of arms and accoutrements, or even horses, did not make the men wealthy. Wagons and supplies were destroyed, though of course the men were allowed to appropriate anything they chose before destroying the captured stores.⁶⁸

Those that did not approve of Mosby or his command did not realize what he was able to provide the Confederacy.

The operations that took place in the spring and summer of 1864 were outstanding examples of Mosby's leadership skills. To keep the Federal troops occupied, he used all of the 43rd Battalion's assets. Stuart tasked Mosby to maintain reconnaissance on both the Baltimore and Ohio and the Orange and Alexandria Railroads. He also directed Mosby to monitor Union forces on task Mosby to report troop movements on both sides of the Blue Ridge Mountains.⁶⁹ Mosby's unit was now large enough that he had organized a staff including a quartermaster and an adjutant to help with the support needed for his command.⁷⁰ He delegated responsibility to carry out these missions to his subordinate commanders showing his leadership development of these commanders. Mosby "had such confidence in the ability of his officers that he permitted them frequently to lay out their own work, or rather details of it." He would assign them to an area and then leave them the mission and the responsibility to successfully plan and accomplish it. The larger scale missions, however would be led by Mosby himself.⁷¹ This is an example of how through his subordinate leaders he was building the teamwork

necessary to support their leadership. Mosby learned as he sought to improve his organization.

At the beginning of the year, Ulysses S. Grant had taken charge of the Union forces and a new style of warfare emerged. Grant focused his efforts on Lee's Army and the destruction of the Confederate "infrastructure and morale." "He [Grant] commanded the generals to destroy rail lines, bridges, industry, mills, storage facilities, livestock, and even crops in the fields."⁷² Mosby spent May and June doggedly attacking the supply trains of the Union forces maneuvering to surround Lee. Union forces in Mosby's area of operations came under the new command of Major General David Hunter, and he was directed by Grant to live off the land. Unlike previous commanders, Hunter did not feel threatened by the partisans and he initiated a policy of burning the homes of civilians that he thought supported the rangers.⁷³ Hunter conducted an unsuccessful offensive at the end of May and was driven out of the Shenandoah Valley by General Jubal Early. Mosby did not cease his operations during this period. Hunter was replaced after the Union command became dissatisfied with lack of progress in the Shenandoah Valley.⁷⁴

An example of Mosby's successful leadership development is found in the actions of Lieutenant Joseph H. Nelson, the commanding officer of Company A. Mosby left him at Charlestown "for the purpose of intercepting and notifying me of any approach in my rear from Harper's Ferry. As I had anticipated, a body of cavalry, largely superior in numbers to his force, moved out from that point. Lieutenant Nelson gallantly charged and routed them, killing and wounding several and taking 19 prisoners and 27 horses. We sustained no loss on this expedition."⁷⁵ Mosby's subordinates attempted to emulate him. Mosby's influence over his subordinate leaders was evident in their exploits. Some

were successful and some were not. "Lt. William L. Hunter conducted a frontal assault on a stronger enemy force . . . and was captured. Capt. Walter E. Frankland disobeyed Mosby's order to set an ambush and conducted a disastrous frontal assault on . . . a strong defensive position; Mosby relieved him from command."⁷⁶ A successful subordinate received great praise from him; there was no room for failure.

Mosby assembled his men at Rectortown on 22 June and held the first official roll call of the battalion. His battalion now numbered 260 men. At this meeting, Mosby issued his orders prescribing the boundaries of the area that they were allowed to operate in. He directed that the men had to live with these boundaries and leave only with permission. Mosby further directed that a roll call be held at every meeting and if a member of his command missed two meetings in a row without an explanation he would be sent to the regular army.

The Confederacy area was a large trapezoid, encompassing approximately 125 square miles. The western border was formed by the Blue Ridge Mountains from Snicker's Gap (at Snickersville) in the north to Manassas Gap (at Linden) in the south. The southern edge ran east from Linden, through Salem, to The Plain. The Bull Run Mountains formed the eastern limit, from The Plains north to Aldie on the Little River Turnpike. The turnpike was the northern border from Aldie west to Snicker's Gap.⁷⁷

This is another example of Mosby's ability to organize and plan for operations. He needed the discipline that he continued to enforce and as his unit became larger it had to be more decentralized.

During the summer, Mosby appeared to be out of the loop with respect to the Confederate operational plan. This could be attributed to Stuart's death back in May. Without his mentor, Mosby may not have had the conduit of information with the Confederate Command. It is most evident in that his report of his operations during the

summer was not written until September.⁷⁸ During these months, Mosby learned of General Jubal Early's operations in the Shenandoah Valley. Not knowing the plan, he assumed Early was moving into Maryland from Winchester and Mosby decided to raid the B&O between Harper's Ferry and Washington at Point of Rocks.

On 4 July 1864, Mosby decided to attack using conventional tactics. Mosby and his men acquired a twelve-pound Napoleon artillery piece. He fired the artillery piece at a boat in a canal and at a passenger train that happened to be passing through the area. At the same time the howitzer was firing, Mosby and his men attacked the Union camps in the vicinity, plundering them and burning boats in the canal. The psychological effect of his attack was enormous. Mosby's tactics reinforced a belief the Union forces had that Early's Confederates were attacking. Mosby's raid cut communications and prevented a train with reinforcements from reaching Harper's Ferry. The Union army was forced to send 2,800 dismounted cavalry from Washington in order to reestablish communications. This drained the defenses of Washington and created panic.⁷⁹ This action again demonstrated Mosby's appreciation of using different tactics for different situations. He conducted a daylight attack and used conventional tactics instead of his normal raids. He was able to portray a much larger force and he was successful.

On 6 July 1864 Mosby moved with approximately 175 men toward Aldie to attack the 2nd Massachusetts Cavalry. Mosby attacked the Union force at Mount Zion Church where the Union troops had stopped to rest. Mosby and his men charged the Union forces in a frontal assault. The Union troops formed in two ranks to counter the attack but Mosby's men charged right into them firing their pistols in a haphazard manner. Mosby's men quickly routed the Union forces and they succeeded in killing

fourteen, wounding thirty-seven and capturing fifty-five Union troops including the Union commander, Major William H. Forbes. They also captured approximately one hundred horses and all their equipment.⁸⁰

Mosby eventually contacted Early through a ranger Mosby had sent to provide liaison to him. Mosby did not like Early but he volunteered his services to him. He received no compliment for his Point of Rock raid and only oral orders requesting him to support Early by attacking the railroad and telegraph and conducting reconnaissance in Maryland. Instead of obeying Early's orders, Mosby moved to link up with him on Maryland Heights. This failure to obey orders stemmed from Mosby's wanting hand written orders and congratulations.⁸¹ For the rest of the month, Mosby conducted his own operations harassing the Federal troops that Early was fighting. While these operations sometimes supported Early's army they were not always in concert with them. Mosby did provide some useful intelligence for him to use. The failure of Mosby to obey orders demonstrated a lack of loyalty on Mosby's part and was a clear leadership failure. Mosby was accustomed to being a privileged subordinate under Stuart and Lee and when he was not treated as such by Early, he rebelled. This was unconscionable because Mosby would never have allowed this from his subordinates and he set a bad example. Although, the effects of this action were not as drastic as they might have been, Mosby did allow his emotions to control his actions.

Sheridan in the Valley

Mosby formed his men in Upperville on 28 July 1864 and created Company E with ninety-six rangers assigned. The elections were held with the standard practice that

Mosby had imposed. Company E commenced operations and it did encounter the 8th Illinois Cavalry but it was only a minor affair.

In the last part of July, Mosby created a sixth company, which was an artillery battery, comprised of four howitzers.⁸² Mosby continually reorganized and sought to improve his organization. This demonstrated that he realized organizational growth and adapted his organization to meet the environment.

General Phil Sheridan took command on 7 August 1864 of the Union's Middle Military Division, and assumed responsibility for West Virginia, the Shenandoah Valley, and Washington. He began operations to counter Early's forces and push him out of the area. Sheridan hoped to engage Early in the vicinity of Winchester, but Early decided to withdraw to the Strasburg-Cedar Creek area. Sheridan's army began to outrun his existing supplies, so he directed that a wagon train depart from Harper's Ferry and move to Winchester.⁸³ Mosby's men infiltrated Sheridan's army and learned that a large supply train of wagons was moving through Berryville. Mosby and some of his scouts moved among the Union troops at night reconning the situation. The next morning, 13 August 1864, Mosby shelled the wagon train and then attacked with his forces in their "characteristic horse-race attack, screaming and firing their revolvers."⁸⁴ Mosby and his men forced the Union guards to fall back and eventually flee. The rangers captured 200 prisoners, 420 mules, 200 cattle, and 36 horses and plundered or destroyed approximately 40 wagons. Mosby's forces suffered only five casualties. Mosby did miss an opportunity to capture Sheridan's army payroll that was in one of the wagons, but the effect of the wagon raid was immense. Sheridan directed that all couriers would now have an eight to ten cavalryman escort and he sent a 1,800-man infantry brigade on permanent duty as

wagon train guards. The newspapers would exaggerate accounts of this raid and it only furthered the embarrassment that Sheridan felt.⁸⁵

Mosby assembled his unit at Piedmont on 13 September 1864 and formed Company F, his seventh company. This was the only instance that he did not give an immediate mission to a newly formed company. There was no reason that appeared why Mosby departed from this team-building practice. It does highlight that Mosby was not locked into conducting this practice but maybe should have been. Mosby was injured again a few days later while returning from a successful scouting raid on a Union camp near Centreville. He was shot in the left groin and taken to a local house where the wound was dressed. He convalesced for two weeks in Lynchburg at his parent's house. At about this time, newspapers were spreading accounts of Mosby's men hanging Union soldiers and brutally killing others.⁸⁶ Only the month before, Sheridan had issued orders for the imprisonment of all physically fit southern males thought to be assisting the partisans. In addition, Sheridan had begun the "scorched earth" policy that would continue for the rest of the fall destroying crops, homes, and livelihoods in Mosby's Confederacy.⁸⁷

Mosby displayed good judgment in the way he handled the executions of some of his men. It has been mentioned by several sources that George Custer ordered the executions of some of Mosby's men who were captured. According to Jeffrey Wert some of Custer's men participated in the executions, but there is no evidence that he gave the actual order. Sometime between 22 and 25 September 1864, Union soldiers shot four men and hanged two. The two that were hanged refused to tell the Federals of Mosby's headquarters. A Federal trooper wrote of the incident, "Those men should never have

been hung for not betraying their Commander. . . . I think the order of Gen. Torbert was unwise, narrow and cruel in the extreme.”⁸⁸ The fact that these two men would give their lives to protect Mosby shows their loyalty to him and his influence over them.

Mosby decided that George Custer was responsible and issued an order to hang an equal amount of any of Custer’s men who were captured. He sent a letter to General Lee who approved of this action, and the letter was forwarded to the Confederate Secretary of War, who also approved. By the time Mosby received Lee’s authorization a seventh member of Mosby’s command had been executed. On 6 November 1864 Mosby’s men had captured twenty-seven Union soldiers, some of which belonged to Custer’s Michigan Brigade. Out of a hat slips of paper were drawn and seven of those with a mark were taken away to be executed. Four of these men were shot at (one was able to escape) and three were hanged. A note was placed on one of the three “These men have been hung in retaliation for an equal number of Colonel Mosby’s men hung by order of General Custer. . . . Measure for measure.” Mosby justified these actions, “It was not an act of revenge, but a judicial sentence to save not only the lives of my own men, but the lives of the enemy. It had that effect. I regret that fate thrust such a duty upon me; I do not regret that I faced and performed it.”⁸⁹

Mosby wrote a letter to Major General Sheridan, the commanding Union officer in the Shenandoah Valley, dated 11 November 1864 in which he stated: “Hereafter any prisoners falling into my hands will be treated with the kindness due to their condition, unless some new act of barbarity shall compel me, reluctantly, to adopt a line of policy repugnant to humanity.”⁹⁰ Mosby was decisive, yet he did not let his emotions control his decisions. He waited for approval of his actions and he delegated the task

accomplishment to his subordinates. He clearly understood the consequences of a continuing massacre of men between his troops and the Federals. His letter to Sheridan was proof that his objective was to insure that the sides were equal and to prevent similar problems in the future.

Mosby influenced the Union forces as they used him to their advantage. When Sheridan was sent into Virginia he used Mosby to help him in his efforts. This demonstrated that while Mosby was a thorn in the side of the Federals, ironically he and his command were also helping them out.

When it came to Mosby and his rangers, Sheridan evinced something of a double mind. Depending on his audience and the impression he wished to convey, the guerillas were either a mere annoyance that “one good regiment could clear out any time” or a looming threat to his entire army that even a corps of infantry was hard pressed to thwart. In general, the level of difficulty presented by Mosby was directly proportional to the level of compliance Sheridan intended to give a particular order. If he was writing to Grant, then “every train, every small party, and every straggler has been bushwacked” - Mosby was everywhere. If on the other hand, the over-burdened garrison commander at Harpers Ferry wanted help in defending the military and politically sensitive railroad against repeated Rebel incursions, then the single cavalry regiment he had on hand was sufficient for the job . . . the joke heard often around Union campfires that “Mosby is Sheridan’s provost guard” took on a grim twist when contrasted to examples of similar guerrilla humor.⁹¹

While the Union forces conducted their burning of the area, Sheridan realized that he needed a secure line of communication to move south for operations against Richmond. Sheridan wanted to reopen the Manassas Gap Railroad. The railroad was actually a section of the Orange and Alexandria Railroad that went west in Manassas to Strasburg in the Shenandoah Valley. The railroad had been destroyed in the early part of the war and never reopened. In October 1864, engineer crews began repairs under the heavy guard of Union forces. Mosby’s men chose isolated groups of these engineers to

attack and Union leaders were forced to send more troops to help protect the construction.⁹² The Union leadership had to resort to drastic measures to protect this railroad.

The Secretary of War directs that, in retaliation for the murderous acts of guerrilla bands, composed of and assisted by the inhabitants along the Manassas Gap Railroad, and as a measure necessary to keep that road in running order, you proceed to destroy every house within five miles of the road which is not required for our own purposes, or which is not occupied by persons known to be friendly. All males suspected of belonging to, or assisting, the robber bands of Mosby, will be sent, under guard, to the provost-marshal at Washington, to be confined in the Old Capitol prison. The women and children will be assisted in going north or south, as they may select. They will be permitted to carry with them their personal property and such provisions as they may require for their own use. Forage, animals, and grain will be taken for the use of the United States. All timber and brush within musketry fire of the road will be cut down and destroyed. Printed notices will be circulated and posted that any citizens found within five miles of the road hereafter will be considered as robbers and bushwhackers, and be treated accordingly. Copies of these instructions will be sent to General Augur and General Sheridan, with orders to give you all possible military aid for the accomplishment of these objects. The inhabitants of the country will be notified that for any further hostilities committed on this road or its employes an additional strip of ten miles on each side will be laid waste, and that section of country entirely depopulated.⁹³

Eventually, Sheridan had to cancel plans to use the railroad and he and Grant had to change their plans.⁹⁴ Mosby considered his operations against the railroad as being highly effective in preventing Sheridan's movement. "My success in accomplishing this was of greater military value than anything I did in the war, for it saved Richmond for several months."⁹⁵

On 14 October 1864 Mosby conducted another of his raids, later celebrated as "Greenback Raid." On the night of the 13th, Mosby and his men moved to Brown's Crossing on the B&O Railroad which was between Harper's Ferry and Martinsburg. Mosby had his men loosen a section of the track to cause a derailment. The rangers

jumped on the stopped train, forced the passengers to disembark and looted the train.

The train carried the payroll for Sheridan's Army consisting of \$173,000. Mosby had the men divide up the money among the approximate eighty-four rangers, roughly \$2,100 per man. He refused to accept a share for himself but did allow his men to purchase for him a horse he had admired.⁹⁶

The Battalion becomes a Regiment

The 43rd Battalion was now so large that it was necessary to reorganize. The destruction throughout the area did not support Mosby logistically and he had a plan to split his unit into two subordinate commands. Mosby went to Lee in Petersburg to seek his counsel. Lee approved of Mosby's plan to send half of his unit to the Northern Neck of Virginia, but Lee was not allowed to approve a regimental command for Mosby because of army regulations. Lee suggested Mosby go to see Secretary of War James Seddon with his proposal. "I beg leave to recommend, in order to secure greater efficiency in my command," Mosby wrote, "that it be divided into two battalions, each to be commanded by a major. The scope of duties devolving upon me being of a much wider extent than on officers of the same rank in the regular service, but small time is allowed me to attend to the details of organization, discipline, &c. I am confident that the arrangement I propose would give me much more time both for planning and executing enterprises against the enemy."⁹⁷ Secretary Seddon, Mosby's champion, approved the proposal and as of 7 December 1864 Mosby was promoted to full colonel and the 43rd Battalion was reorganized into a regiment.⁹⁸ Mosby consistently looked for ways to improve his administrative control and he never ceased his planning and organizing as evidenced by this proposal.

Lieutenant Colonel William Chapman's battalion moved to the Northern Neck and wintered there. Major Richard's battalion remained in Loudoun County to winter there. On 21 December 1864, Mosby was dining at a supporter's house located between Rectortown and Rector's Cross Roads. Mosby heard the sound of horsesteps and opened a door to find that the house was surrounded by Union cavalry. When the Union troops entered the house, he raised his hands and tried to conceal his rank. Through some misfortune, a Union soldier fired a round from outside that struck Mosby in the abdomen. He feigned that it was a deadly wound and went into a nearby bedroom. In the process, he managed to take off his coat (with the rank) and hide it under a piece of furniture. He fell on the floor, smeared blood to make the wound look worse and when questioned he lied about his name and unit. The Union troops examined him and thought he would die so they stripped him of his clothing and left him. Mosby was treated by his surgeon, William Dunn, who took the bullet out. Bedridden, Mosby's men frequently transported him to safe houses to avoid capture. Eventually, he was taken to his parents' house in Lynchburg on 3 January 1865 to recuperate. The Union forces soon learned of their mistake, and it was all over the headlines that Mosby was dead.⁹⁹

At the end of March 1865, Mosby received orders from Lee directing that he protect the northern section of Virginia. Mosby probably realized that the end of the war was near, but he continued to do his duty. The orders from Lee told Mosby to "Collect your command and watch the country from front of Gordonsville to Blue Ridge and also Valley. Your command is all now in that section, and the general will rely on you to watch and protect the country. If any of your command is in Northern Neck call it to you."¹⁰⁰ Mosby realized the possible outcome of the situation, but he followed Lee's

instructions sending a message to Lieutenant Colonel Chapman in the Northern Neck and reorganizing to create another company. During the first week of April, Mosby created Company H, his eighth and final company.¹⁰¹ This unit conducted a reconnaissance and determined that the Loudoun Rangers were established on pickets at Keye's Ford, a fordsite located southwest of Harper's Ferry. The Loudoun Rangers had been created in 1862 by the Union to serve as Federal scouts because of their knowledge of the terrain in northern Virginia. In a daylight operation, Company H passed through the picket line, attacked them and captured sixty-five men and eighty-one horses.¹⁰²

Mosby did not realize that on 9 April 1865 General Lee surrendered to General Grant. Mosby learned of the surrender from an article in a newspaper. Chapman's battalion had not linked up with him at this point and Mosby learned that General Joe Johnston had not surrendered. Union officials realized that Mosby was not included in Lee's surrender, so Major General Winfield S. Hancock sent Mosby a letter stating that he was prepared to "receive the surrender of the forces under your command on the same conditions offered to General Lee." On 16 April, Mosby sent Lieutenant Colonel Chapman, who had since returned to Mosby, to Major General Hancock with a letter stating that he needed to verify the surrender of Lee through Confederate sources. "With no disposition, however, to cause the useless effusion of blood or to inflict on a war-worn population any unnecessary distress, I am ready to agree to a suspension of hostilities for a short time in order to enable me to communicate with my own authorities or until I can obtain sufficient intelligence to determine my future action."¹⁰³ Mosby traveled and met with a delegation from Hancock in Millwood on 18 April and discussed the possible surrender. Mosby stated that he had still not received word from the Confederate

command and he requested a two-day extension to the cease-fire, which the delegation agreed to. On 20 April, Mosby again met with the delegation in Millwood. On the same day, General Johnston surrendered his forces. Mosby requested another extension, which was refused. One of Mosby's men felt the delegation was actually a trap after spotting a Union cavalry brigade in a nearby woods, and wanted to attack them on the spot. A description of the scene reveals the seriousness of the event. "Mosby stood up slowly, placing his hand on his revolver, and in that low voice of his, stated: 'If the truce no longer protects us, we are at your mercy; but we shall protect ourselves.' Mosby then left the scene and no Union forces pursued."¹⁰⁴

Mosby's actions were probably due to the enormous amount of stress he was under. Facing the face of loss of the Confederacy, and the loss of most of his options, he maintained an enormous amount of self-control. It would have been easy, although extremely dangerous, for him to have displayed a rash attitude and attack. He did not attack, and in not doing so, he preserved the lives of his men.

In Mosby's final act as the commander of the regiment, he remained an inspiring leader. Mosby met with his regiment at Salem, Fauquier County, on 21 April 1865. There he had his adjutant read this note:

Soldiers! I have summoned you together for the last time. The vision we have cherished of a free and independent country, has vanished, and that country, is now the spoil of a conqueror. I disband your organization in preference to surrendering it to our enemies. I am no longer your commander. After association of more than two eventful years, I part from you with a just pride, in the fame of your achievements, and grateful recollections of your generous kindness to myself. And now at this moment of bidding you a final adieu accept the assurance of my unchanging confidence and regard.¹⁰⁵

Mosby continued to influence his men by refusing to surrender. After its disbanding, a portion of the regiment, led by Lieutenant Colonel William H. Chapman, formally surrendered at Winchester on 21 April 1865.¹⁰⁶ Mosby did not turn himself in for parole until 17 June, fearing that he would be arrested instead.¹⁰⁷

Mosby commanded a formal organization for almost two years. To examine Mosby after this, the leadership format discussed in chapter 1 will be used:

1. Values (again this incorporates loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity, personal courage--in today's Army. During this time period, values equated to the standards of personal conduct). Mosby demonstrated his high values throughout his command. He displayed loyalty to his commanders with only one exception, Jubal Early. This lack of loyalty displayed was due to a personality conflict that appeared between the two. The reasons for it are inconsequential, and Mosby should have followed his orders. Mosby did his duty continuously even when he realized that the end of the Confederacy was near. Reigning as he did in Mosby's Confederacy, he could have easily sought personal wealth in his operations but he did not and this displayed his selfless service as well as his honor and integrity. His personal courage cannot be questioned because in every operation he displayed it--sometimes without thought of his own life.

2. Attributes (mental, physical, and emotional). Mosby possessed the desire to accomplish his missions. He continually displayed initiative conducting his operations and the way he reorganized his command. Mosby's will to accomplish missions sometimes impaired his judgment, as demonstrated in the Seneca Mills operation where he chose to attack in daylight in the face of an alerted foe. Mosby was extremely self-confident and an example of this was in the report back to Secretary of War Seddon that

no Union presence was in Loudoun County. He was disciplined in his conduct and that of his men. Twice wounded during his command, Mosby displayed the physical stamina to overcome these wounds and continue with his mission. Mosby's bearing was also demonstrated in the professional conduct that he displayed to his men through the physical manifestation of his values mentioned earlier. An emotional youth, one who risked his life in rash charges, he remained calm and collected during the stressful periods of combat and his command. He did allow his emotions to control his actions when he disobeyed Early's orders. This was unacceptable as a leader and in doing so he set a poor example for his subordinates.

3. Skills (interpersonal, conceptual, technical, and tactical). Mosby demonstrated sound judgment in the employment of his forces. He did make some errors in his judgment that were stated earlier but overall he managed to overcome these. His interpersonal skills were evident in the empowerment that he gave his subordinates and the motivational effect that he had on his men. Mosby possessed the expertise required, having learned the technical skills of command from others. His tactical knowledge and warfighting skills were demonstrated on all of his missions. He employed partisan warfare tactics that are still being used today.

4. Actions (influencing, operating, improving). Mosby displayed good influencing actions through his communication, decision making and motivation. His communicating actions are best revealed in his reports that he sent to his chain of command. In each one, he clearly stated the intent of the message and provided his superiors with the intelligence they required. In addressing his men, Mosby was always clear and concise and they understood him. Mosby's decision making was always logical

and he used the resources available to him wisely. He inspired his men to accomplish daring and dangerous missions and he guided them to mission accomplishment. He developed executable plans, that were feasible and flexible. He demonstrated tactical proficiency in all of his operations using conventional and unconventional tactics when necessary. Mosby assessed his operations, which was demonstrated by the continual improvement and refinement of his tactics. He stated some of this assessment in his reports. Mosby invested time in developing his subordinates and they were eventually the leaders of his subordinate commands. He understood the motivations of his partisan rangers and built the unit around these capitalizing on the desires of his men.

Endnotes

¹Jeffrey D. Wert, *Mosby's Rangers* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1990), 71.

²*Ibid.*

³Wert, 69-70.

⁴John W. Thomason, Jr., *Jeb Stuart* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1958), 79.

⁵*Ibid.*

⁶Freeman E. Jones, "Mosby's Rangers and Partisan Warfare" (Master's Thesis, Command and General Staff College: Fort Leavenworth, KS, 1993), 43.

⁷*Ibid.*, 43.

⁸*Ibid.*, 11.

⁹*Ibid.*, 13-14.

¹⁰*The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, Series I, Volume 27, Part 2 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1885; reprint, Harrisburg, PA: Historical Times, Inc. 1985), 787, hereafter cited

as *OR* all reports come from Series I, Battle Reports; and James A. Ramage, *Gray Ghost* (Lexington, KY: The University Press of Kentucky, 1999), 91.

¹¹Ramage, 10.

¹²Virgil C. Jones and Staff, "An Appraisal of: John S. Mosby" *Civil War Times Illustrated*, November 1965, 5.

¹³Author's Note: Mosby was often accused of wearing Union uniforms by his enemies because he was able to slip so easily into their lines. In fact, Mosby defended himself against these accusations by saying that he and his men may have worn black raincoats which concealed his uniforms or because of the darkness they were indistinguishable from Union troops. Mosby directed that his men wear the full Confederate uniform, complete with insignia of rank.

¹⁴Ramage, 91-92; and Edward G. Longacre, *The Cavalry at Gettysburg* (Cranbury, NJ: Associated University Press, 1986), 120-121.

¹⁵Ramage, 93-94; and Kevin H. Siepel, *Rebel, The Life and Times of John Singleton Mosby* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1983), 96.

¹⁶Wert, 83.

¹⁷V. C. Jones and Staff, 5.

¹⁸Virgil C. Jones, *Gray Ghosts and Rebel Raiders* (Atlanta: Mockingbird Books, 1976), 193.

¹⁹Wert, 121-122; and Edward J. Stackpole, *Sheridan in the Shenandoah Jubal Early's Nemesis* (New York: Bonanza Books, 1961), 143.

²⁰*OR*, vol. 29, pt. 1, 70; vol. 27, pt. 2, 991.

²¹Wert, 91-93.

²²*OR*, vol. 29 pt.2, 653.

²³Ramage, 112.

²⁴*OR*, vol. 29, pt. 2, 652

²⁵Ramage, 108.

²⁶Wert, 96.

²⁷*OR*, vol. 29, pt. 1, 80-81; and Wert, 95-96;

²⁸Ramage, 115.

²⁹*OR* , vol. 29, pt. 1, 81.

³⁰*Ibid.*

³¹*Ibid.*

³²Wert, 100.

³³F. Jones, 53.

³⁴*OR*, vol. 29, pt. 1, 495; and Ramage, 121-122.

³⁵Wert, 109.

³⁶*Ibid.*, 111.

³⁷Wert, 111-112.

³⁸Siepel, 101.

³⁹*Ibid.*, 103-104.

⁴⁰*OR*, vol. 33, 16.

⁴¹Wert, 137-138.

⁴²F. Jones, 59-60.

⁴³*OR*, vol. 33, 1113.

⁴⁴*Ibid.*, 1081-1082.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 1082.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 1082-1083.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 1252-1253.

⁴⁸*Ibid.*

⁴⁹Wert, 140-142.

⁵⁰Ramage, 137-138; and *OR* vol. 33, 159-160.

⁵¹Wert, 150.

⁵²*OR*, vol. 33, 1241.

⁵³Siepel, 111.

⁵⁴*OR*, vol. 33, 249.

⁵⁵*Ibid.*

⁵⁶James J. Williamson, *Mosby's Rangers, A Record of the Operations of the Forty-Third Battalion of Virginia Cavalry from its Organization to the Surrender* (New York: Sturgis and Walton Co, 1909), 18.

⁵⁷Williamson, 23.

⁵⁸Wert, 124-125.

⁵⁹*Ibid.*

⁶⁰*OR*, vol. 51, pt. 2, 936.

⁶¹Wert, 270.

⁶²*Ibid.*, 125.

⁶³*OR*, vol. 33, 1274-1275.

⁶⁴*Ibid.*

⁶⁵Reid Mitchell, *Civil War Soldiers* (New York: Simon and Schuster, Inc., 1998), 154.

⁶⁶Wert, 124.

⁶⁷Ramage, 97.

⁶⁸Williamson, 22.

⁶⁹John S. Mosby, *The Memoirs of Colonel John S. Mosby*, ed., Charles Wells Russel (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1959), 272.

⁷⁰F. Jones, 66.

⁷¹Wert, 188.

⁷²F. Jones, 71.

⁷³Ramage, 149-150.

⁷⁴Gutwald, 104-105.

⁷⁵*OR*, vol. 37, pt. 1, 3.

⁷⁶Ramage, 148.

⁷⁷F. Jones, 73.

⁷⁸*OR*, vol. 37, pt. 1, 2.

⁷⁹Ramage, 155-157.

⁸⁰*Ibid.*, 159-160; and *OR*, vol. 37, pt. 1, 4.

⁸¹Ramage, 161-162.

⁸²F. Jones, 78-79.

⁸³Gutwald, 105-106.

⁸⁴Ramage, 191.

⁸⁵*Ibid.*, 190-191.

⁸⁶F. Jones, 88; and Ramage, 196.

⁸⁷F. Jones, 86; and *OR*, vol. 43, pt. 1, 822, 843.

⁸⁸Wert, 215-218.

⁸⁹*Ibid.*, 245-248.

⁹⁰*OR*, vol. 43, pt. 1, 920.

⁹¹Roy Morris, Jr., *Sheridan, The Life and Wars of General Phil Sheridan* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1992), 225.

⁹²F. Jones, 93-94.

⁹³*OR*, vol. 43, pt. 2, 348.

⁹⁴Virgil C. Jones, *Ranger Mosby* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1944; reprint, Mclean, VA: EPM Publications, 1972), 215.

⁹⁵Mosby, *Memoirs*, 328.

⁹⁶V. C. Jones, *Ranger Mosby*, 216-219; and Siepel 125-126.

⁹⁷*OR*, vol. 43, pt. 1, 937.

⁹⁸Wert, 264; and Ramage, 232.

⁹⁹Ramage, 233-236, and Mosby, *Memoirs*, 336-46.

¹⁰⁰*OR*, vol. 46, pt. 3, 1359.

¹⁰¹Wert, 277.

¹⁰²Ramage, 247.

¹⁰³*OR*, vol. 46, pt. 3, 714.

¹⁰⁴*Ibid.*, 765-766; and Wert, 279.

¹⁰⁵Mosby, *Memoirs*, 360-361.

¹⁰⁶*OR*, vol. 46, pt. 1, 527.

¹⁰⁷Ramage, 268-269.

CHAPTER 5

LIFE AFTER THE WAR

Furl up the guidons! Hide them away! For our Cause is a thing of yesterday! The last raid ridden! The last charge made! And sheathed forever each flashing blade!¹

Arthur Louis Peticolas, *Confederate Veteran*

After the Civil War, Mosby did not fade away and he was not one to renounce his leadership abilities and their usefulness. He settled down in Warrenton, Virginia, to reestablish his law practice and became a father and husband once again. Grant became president in 1869 and Mosby visited him in the White House offering his support. Mosby publicly supported the Republican during his reelection campaign in 1872, and Grant was able to carry Virginia. Mosby was quoted as saying, "Some said they couldn't sacrifice their principles for Grant's friendship. I didn't sacrifice mine."² Some pro-Confederates could not appreciate Mosby's actions and on one night in 1877, a would-be assassin fired at Mosby as he stepped off a train in Warrenton, Virginia.³

The North, which had once hated the infamous partisan, became pro-Mosby. Mosby wrote a letter to a former Confederate associate and blamed the South and the "sectional unity of the Southern people" for the problems they endured. A northern paper the *New York Herald* received the letter and responded, surprised that the former partisan leader was a "writer of peculiar piquancy and power."⁴ Other papers followed with detailed stories about the periodic reunions Mosby's men held after the war. As the twentieth century arrived and the bitterness of Reconstruction had faded, both Northerners and Southerners began to romanticize Mosby's exploits. The University of Virginia awarded Mosby a bronze medal in 1915. The inscription read: "Endowed with

the gift of friendship, which won for you the confidence of both Lee and Grant, you have proven yourself a man of war, a man of letters, and a man of affairs worthy of the best traditions of your University and your State, to both of which you have been a loyal son.”⁵

Grant's successor, President Hayes, appointed Mosby as the U.S. Consul to Hong Kong from 1878-1885. While serving in Hong Kong, the premier sought Mosby's military skills. “China and France had become involved in an irregular war. [Premier] Li sent Mosby an invitation to enlist the services of 300 of his fellow Confederates from the United States and to fight with the Chinese. . . . But Mosby refused with the excuse that he was reluctant to fight a nation that had befriended America during the Revolution.”⁶ Upon returning to the U.S., Mosby served as attorney for the Southern Pacific Railway in California and later in Colorado as Special Agent for the General Land Office. In 1902, President Theodore Roosevelt appointed Mosby as an attorney in the Department of Justice where he served until 1910. After a series of physical debilitations, Mosby died on 30 May 1916 at the age of eighty-two.⁷ Up to his death, Mosby had continued to serve as a leader in the civilian world. His leadership skills were probably best captured by former President Grant, who stated, “There were probably few men in the South who could have commanded successfully a separate force in rear of an opposing army, and so near the border of hostilities, as long as he did without losing his entire command.”⁸ An obituary in *The Nation* summed up Mosby's leadership and effectiveness:

The most picturesque of the few remaining notables of the Civil War was John S. Mosby, who died last week in Washington, thus surviving by half a century the period of his numerous hairbreadth escapes. . . . He was not in any sense a great cavalry commander, like J. E. B. Stuart, or Nathan Forrest, or Morgan. . . . Thus, the indirect results of his activities were far beyond the actual military successes

achieved; he was a gad-fly forever upon the Federal flanks, which no retaliatory lunge was able to destroy. Then as a source of news to the Confederate chieftains he was unsurpassed. As he himself once described his activities: "As a line is only as strong as its weakest point it was necessary for the enemy to be as strong as I was at every point to resist my attacks . . . To destroy supply train, to break up the means of conveying intelligence, thus isolating an army from its bases, as well as the different corps from each other, to confuse their plans by capturing dispatches, are the objects of partisan war. It is just as legitimate to fight an enemy in the rear as in front. The only difference is in the danger."⁹

Conclusion

To provide an overall analysis of John S. Mosby's leadership it was necessary to establish the standards by which to judge when using the leadership dimensions discussed in chapter 1. To identify standards for these dimensions was not an easy task. The standards used were similar in nature to the ones used when evaluating potential officers for the U.S. Army. Each leadership area is addressed below.

Values

Loyalty was defined in the first chapter as "Bear true faith and allegiance to the U.S. Constitution, the Army, your unit, and other soldiers."¹⁰ Obviously this is a modern definition. During Mosby's time loyalty essentially meant remaining faithful to his subordinates and superiors and to his beloved state, Virginia. Mosby easily demonstrated loyalty first to the U.S. and then to Virginia. Mosby most assuredly was loyal to his commanders and there was only one instance where his loyalty in this regard could be questioned--Jubal Early. This affair was discussed earlier, and it does show that in at least this one instance Mosby allowed his personal views to interfere with his loyalty to his superiors. Other than this one instance, Mosby's loyalty was sound, and he did not circumvent the chain of command or try to use it for his own advantage. Mosby always

tried to meet the priorities of his commanders and corrected himself when informed otherwise.

The modern definition of duty was “fulfill your obligations.”¹¹ During the Civil War duty was extremely important. In the modern army, duty “implies a downward obligation and only a sense of obligation within the chain of command and with the Army organization.”¹² In Mosby’s day, duty implied an “upward obligation” to society as a whole. Duty meant that the individual should devote his life to becoming the best. It was important that it was inherent in one’s duty to be a gentleman in public applying the values of the honor code by which they had been raised. Duty was a word that was often used by Civil War officers in reference to doing one’s duty but it generally was defined in vague or ambiguous terms.¹³ General Lee wrote a famous quote about duty in a letter to his son that explains the importance of duty during this time period: “Duty, then, is the sublimest word in our language. Do your duty in all things like the old Puritan. You cannot do more; you should never wish to do less. Never let me and your mother wear one gray hair for any lack of duty on your part.”¹⁴ Mosby sought to carry out the requirements of all of his jobs regardless if he enjoyed them or not. He did his duty throughout the war performing to the standards of the time period in each of the positions he held. There was not one instance that the author found where he did not do his duty – except in the Jubal Early incident.

Respect was defined in the first chapter as “Treat people as they should be treated.”¹⁵ This definition was partly based on the current Consideration of Others Program that the U.S. Army was incorporating to deal with the multicultural diversification of the Army. During Mosby’s era it essentially went back to the

demonstration of the values that a person was taught through his displays of honor and chivalry. Mosby was fair in his treatment of his subordinates and was only harsh when the subordinate failed to comply with his basic rules. Mosby demonstrated respect for the civilians in his area of operations and pillaged only that which was held by Unionist sympathizers or suppliers.

The modern definition of selfless service was as applicable in Mosby's time as it is today. Selfless service was defined as "Put the welfare of the nation, the Army, and subordinates before your own."¹⁶ Mosby continuously demonstrated selfless service by the example he set for his men. He volunteered and served as a private, could have earned thousands of dollars under the Partisan Ranger Act but did not. These are just two of the most obvious examples of selfless service.

In chapter 1, Honor was defined as "live up to all the Army values."¹⁷ Truly, in Mosby's era there was nothing more important than a person's honor.

Assumed to be honorable, he [the soldier/officer] had to act so as to escape any imputation of dishonor. It was not a simple matter; one risked dishonor in many ways -- by employing coarse language, by exhibiting disrespect for women, by dropping from the line of march -- but by far the gravest lapses -- fleeing from battle, for example -- were those that revealed cowardice. Thus the single most effective prescription for maintaining other's assumption that one was a man of honor was to act courageously. Seldom could the soldier with a reputation for courage be thought dishonorable, so incompatible did those traits seem...The linkage between honor and courage manifested itself in Civil War soldiers' frequent references to the "honorable death"--inevitable the courageous death--and the "honorable wound"--inevitably suffered in the course of courageous action.¹⁸

Honor was so valued that men during the Civil War were "paroled" in a number of instances rather than taken prisoner, on their honor to maintain a noncombatant status until informed that a member of the opposing force had likewise been "paroled" or

exchanged.¹⁹ Mosby clearly understood the importance of his honor and he demonstrated his values and sense of honor in the way he led his men. This was exhibited in the disciplinary standards that he held his men to and his own personal conduct throughout the war.

The modern definition of integrity was defined as "Do what's right-legally and morally."²⁰ During the Civil War integrity and honor were indistinguishable. An honorable man's integrity was never questioned. Mosby exhibited good moral judgment and behavior and he abided by basic moral principles of land warfare. The only case where his integrity was questionable was the reprisal executions mentioned earlier. On the whole, Mosby's integrity remained intact.

Personal courage was defined as to "face fear, danger, or adversity (physical or moral)."²¹ Certainly this was important in Mosby's day and like integrity, this was a part of an individual's honor. Civil War leaders had to be courageous on the battlefield in order to inspire their men to accomplish missions.

In general terms, the Civil War officer led his men, not because he wore shoulder straps, but because the men came to recognize and accept him as a qualified leader. This meant, above everything else, that in battle the officer had to be absolutely fearless. Even a major general would immediately lose control over his men if they found reason to suspect his courage. From army commander on down, he had to show physical courage rather ostentatiously. If he could not do this he could not do anything.²²

Mosby persevered in the face of adversity numerous times that were mentioned in the previous chapters. There is not one mention in any writing that Mosby ever showed fear that his men saw. He did flee from potential entrapments and overwhelming forces but these cannot be interpreted to demonstrate his lack of courage. He personally took responsibility for his actions, be they successful or a failure, as reflected in his reports,

demonstrating his moral courage. Mosby was typical of the successful leaders in his acts of courage under fire.

Attributes

As mentioned in chapter 1, a leader is a combination of many attributes, which the U.S. Army categorized into three parts: mental, physical, and emotional. Mental attributes included will, self-discipline, initiative, judgment, self-confidence, intelligence, and cultural awareness. Mosby was a strong-willed person who consistently sought to overcome his weaknesses. He may have been over confident certainly in his youth, and possibly in some of his endeavors when attacking larger forces. He continuously maintained the initiative surprising his enemy and he appeared to be an intelligent man based upon his actions and writings.

Physical attributes were comprised of health fitness, physical fitness, and military and professional bearing. During the Civil War, the average soldier or officer was not as concerned with his physical fitness as the modern Army. The things a subordinate cared about a leader amounted to his performance in battle. To the leader this was demonstrated by the good example that he continuously tried to set for his subordinates.

Officers in the Civil War were expected to lead by example. . . . Yet an officer who endangered his men unnecessarily, or who squandered troops haphazardly, appalled and angered the men. When one did not measure up to expectations where courage, fairness, and inspiration were concerned, soldiers in the ranks were unsparing in their criticisms.²³

Mosby never asked his men to do something he would not do as well. Time and again, Mosby was on the battlefield standing shoulder to shoulder with his men. In a modern army, this might have been seen as micromanaging but it was necessary to show

a leadership presence. Mosby's physical maladies from his youth hardened him in his effort to display indefatigable tenacity in battle. Wounded three times, he recovered to fight again.

Emotional attributes were subdivided into self-control, balance, and stability (for specific definitions see chapter 1). Mosby remained calm and effective under pressure mentally preparing for contingencies and motivating others to do the same. Although not discussed in the previous chapters, Mosby maintained a sense of balance in his life, visiting his family as much as possible during the war.

Skills

The skills of a leader were broken down into interpersonal skills, conceptual skills, technical skills, and tactical skills (a definition of these skills is found in chapter 1). For the Civil War officer, interpersonal skills were key in command. An officer who was too harsh risked being voted out or worse, being continuously ridiculed into leaving command. "Those officers who led with gentle persuasiveness and possessed genuine concern for their men almost without exception received obedience and respect."²⁴ Mosby earned the respect of his men through his conduct on and off the battlefield. He had the respect of his peers, his superiors, and his enemies if not their fear. His superiors sought his expertise and advice on tactical matters.

Mosby was creative in his thought processes always looking ahead of his current situation. He anticipated the needs of his superiors capturing and providing vital intelligence. Mosby did not have the military background as was discussed in the second chapter. The education he received in addition to his horsemanship and hunting skills provided him with the adequate tools that were initially necessary for him to soldier.

Mosby's knowledge of tactical skills were an evolution that he continually improved upon. Mosby was not uncommon in this lack of technical or tactical skills.

To begin with, remember that the tradition of the professional soldier with professional training was by no means as well established in the America of 1861 as it is today. On the contrary, American tradition then tended to glorify the amateur-beginning with George Washington himself. Such military heroes as Andrew Jackson and Zachary Taylor had had no West Point training. American experience at least seemed to show that perfectly capable military leaders could come straight out of civil life.²⁵

Actions

The fourth and final area of leadership was the leader's actions. A leader's actions were composed of influencing actions, operating actions and improving actions. For a detailed definition of each of these actions and their subcomponents, refer to chapter 1. These actions fall into three categories: communicating, decision making using, and motivating.

Communicating actions can be accomplished either through written or oral forms of communication. It was established in the chapter 2 that Mosby learned to convey his ideas through written and oral means of communication while as a lawyer. After reading his reports it was possible to discern that he was good at presenting clear ideas and concise information. Although one is no longer able to hear Mosby actually speak, the descriptions of Mosby's effectiveness when addressing others denote that he was also effective in his oral communications. Mosby was able to make timely decisions to appropriately address given situations. He quickly recognized the need for decisions and sometimes acted in the absence of guidance. Mosby did recover after realizing he made incorrect decisions and fought or fled depending on the situation. Mosby motivated his troops as the biggest means of success that he had available. He used their desires and

interests to accomplish his goals. He rewarded success with spoils and promotions and punished poor performance with removal from his unit

Operating actions were used by leaders to accomplish tasks and they were categorized in three ways. They included planning and preparing, executing, and assessing actions (detailed definitions can be found in chapter 1). Planning actions were those done in order to prepare for operations. Mosby used logical, appropriately simple, readily understood plans that would likely accomplish the mission. He delegated actions to his subordinates sufficiently allocating resources on each of his missions. Mosby accomplished the missions he was given, while caring for his people and resources. He thrived in the fluid environment of battle. Although, Mosby did not conduct formal after-action reviews as a soldier today might do, or publish them, he obviously learned from his mistakes and sought to build upon them for his future operations.

Improving actions are those actions used by a leader to insure that subordinates and organizations are constantly working to achieve greater proficiency in the execution of their tasks. Developing, building, and learning are the three types of improving actions. Mosby enhanced the self-confidence, and competence of his subordinates in the way he employed them. After establishing each one of his commands with only one exception, he immediately sent them out on a mission to build their self-confidence and their teamwork within that command. He led by example inspiring his subordinates discussed earlier which also demonstrated his subordinate leader development. These actions also show that Mosby promoted a team effort within his command. Mosby was a good follower and he recognized his place and his unit's place as part of a larger team, the Confederate Army. Lastly, Mosby sought to improve himself on the areas that he

was weak. He read and studied military literature and he followed the examples of his superiors learning as much as he could to improve himself and his unit.

Of all the leadership dimensions, the one that stands out the most for Mosby's success was the personal example that he set. While personal example was not a dimension by itself, it was found in the values, physical attributes, interpersonal skills, and influencing actions. Mosby continually led his men through his personal example. This was a key trait of other Civil War officers that was mentioned earlier. Mosby asked his men to conduct dangerous operations and he personally led them inspiring the men in the process.

The author must acknowledge that there is no simple way to apply rules to say that a partisan leader will be successful if he uses the same qualities that John S. Mosby used. Leadership was and is an art and not a science as most leaders would attest to. There were no set rules for one to follow. The guidelines of the leadership dimensions provide a pathway for the future leader. If enough effort is placed in the leadership development phase, and the leader focuses on the dimensions and employing them the odds are pretty good that he should be successful. In Mosby's case he had the development before the war and early on. While not focusing on the dimensions, he sought to focus his men on key things recognizing the value of them. This combined with the support of the populace and the enthusiasm of his men for their work made him a successful leader. His command may have been successful without him, but probably not for very long. The other partisan units (except for McNeill's Rangers) were disbanded because they could not maintain discipline. Mosby was allowed to maintain his because the discipline of his unit was recognized and his leadership was considered

valuable to the Confederacy. Mosby's performance as a leader in the Civil War can be summed up in the following quote.

It was a bloody business in which the Rangers engaged. But one salient fact emerges--John Mosby and the 43rd Battalion had no equal as guerrillas during the Civil War. Primary credit for that belongs to the commander. With a keen intellect, and uncompromising discipline and sure grasp of the potential of guerrilla warfare, Mosby welded the Rangers into a matchless partisan command and hampered Union campaigns in a strategic region of Virginia. The casualties the Rangers inflicted, the horseflesh, supplies and armament they seized far outweighed the losses incurred. Mosby supplied Jeb Stuart and Robert E. Lee with invaluable intelligence and severed Union lines of communication and supply. If he had achieved nothing else, the information he secured for his superiors and the troops he drained from the invading hosts were important accomplishments in themselves.²⁶

Throughout his life, Mosby's leadership and unique command style enabled him to be so successful. These qualities made him the key figure that he was in the partisan effort of the civil war. The definition of leadership by the U.S. Army was, "the process of influencing people--by providing purpose, direction and motivation--while operating to accomplish the mission and improving the organization."²⁷ described Mosby's actions. He was able to influence subordinates, peers, superiors, and noncombatants. Mosby provided a purpose and he gave them direction and motivation. He also continuously sought ways to improve and expand the organization.²⁸

Mosby continuously and consistently demonstrated the sixteen leadership dimensions that are currently used by the United States Army to assess leadership in officers. He proved himself an extraordinary leader, and these leadership qualities made him successful not only during the war but as a prewar attorney and afterward as he assumed the duties of civilian life.

As the U.S. Army looks at future operations where the potential exists to operate with and against partisan forces it is key to examine the leadership of these organizations. The success or failure of these organizations can largely depend on the leadership.

Endnotes

¹Arthur Louis Peticolas, "Mosby The Partisan," *Confederate Veteran*, November 1924, 11-12.

²"Col. John Mosby and the Southern Code of Honor," available from http://xroads.virginia.edu/~CLASS/am483_97/projects/anderson/intro.html; Internet; accessed 21 November 1998; Jones and Staff, 54; Driver Jr., 210; and Mosby, 383.

³Ibid.

⁴Virgil C. Jones, *Ranger Mosby* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1944; reprint, Mclean, VA: EPM Publications, 1972), 298.

⁵John S. Mosby, *The Memoirs of Colonel John S. Mosby*, ed. Charles Wells Russel (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1959), 9-10.

⁶Jones, *Ranger Mosby*, 300.

⁷"Col. John Mosby and the Southern Code of Honor," Jones and Staff, 54; and Driver, 210.

⁸Jones and Staff, 54.

⁹Author Unknown, "Mosby, The Guerrilla," in *The Nation* 102, no. 2658 (8 June 1916), 5.

¹⁰Headquarters, Department of the Army, Training and Doctrine Command, Field Manual 22-100, *Army Leadership* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Headquarters Training and Doctrine Command, June 1999), 2-3.

¹¹Ibid., 2-4.

¹²Ibid.

¹³Gerald F., Lindermann, *Embattled Courage* (New York: The Free Press, 1987), 10-11.

¹⁴Robert E. Lee, Letter to G.W. Custis Lee, from Arlington House, 5 April 1852, Letter is unpublished and is retained at U.S. Military Academy Special Collections, Bldg 2107, Pershing Center, West Point, NY.

¹⁵Headquarters, Department of the Army, Training and Doctrine Command, Field Manual 22-100, *Army Leadership* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Headquarters Training and Doctrine Command, June 1999), 2-5.

¹⁶*Ibid.*, 2-6.

¹⁷*Ibid.*, 2-7.

¹⁸Lindermann, 12.

¹⁹*Ibid.*, 12.

²⁰Headquarters, Department of the Army, Training and Doctrine Command, *Field Manual 22-100, Army Leadership* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Headquarters Training and Doctrine Command, June 1999), 2-8.

²¹*Ibid.*, 2-9.

²²Bruce Catton, *America Goes to War* (Hanover, NH: Wesleyan University Press, 1986), 53.

²³James I. Robertson Jr., *Soldiers Blue and Gray* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1988), 128.

²⁴*Ibid.*, 130.

²⁵Catton, 36.

²⁶Jeffrey D. Wert, *Mosby's Rangers* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1990), 293.

²⁷Headquarters, Department of the Army, Training and Doctrine Command, Field Manual 22-100, *Army Leadership* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Headquarters Training and Doctrine Command, June 1999), 1.9.

²⁸*Ibid.*

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